

NO ENEMY (BUT HIMSELF)



ELBERT HUBBARD







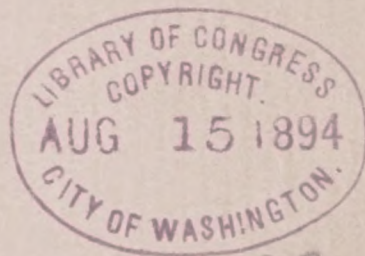
NO ENEMY

(BUT HIMSELF)

BY

ELBERT HUBBARD

AUTHOR OF "ONE DAY," "FORBES OF HARVARD," ETC.



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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to lie i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither :
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

As You Like It.



ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY JAMES B. McCREARY

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NO ENEMY



NO ENEMY.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

"My father charged you in his will to give me good education."

STAMPED leather chairs of different designs; some choice bits of porcelain; several costly rugs; low book shelves; an oaken table in the centre; two or three dainty water-colors; a few rare etchings. Here we have a glimpse of the library of Mr. John Hillard, bachelor, of West 23d Street, New York City.

The Society for the Study of Social Problems had just held its regular monthly meeting. The paper of the evening was by the Rev. Algernon Burtis, Rector of St. Cecilia's. Subject: "The Oppression of the Poor by the Capitalistic Class."

The motion to adjourn had been made and duly seconded; the question had been put and the ayes had it; but somehow the Society for the Study of

Social Problems refused to be dismissed. The members who came "just to listen, not to take part, mind you," as they warningly explained to the president, had gone home; but the seven men who were the bone and sinew, as well as the gray matter, of the society remained.

"You are wrong, my clerical friend—you are wrong. Your knowledge of spiritual things is very great, I will admit, but in matters mundane you are not out of the kindergarten."

The language was exasperating—almost insulting in fact—and that expression "my clerical friend," coming from a man whom he had known from boyhood! Yes, it was a deliberate fling at his high calling—and what under heaven is worse than to have one's statements pooh-poohed and patronizingly dealt with, and this after having spent a full week in prayerfully preparing the paper.

"Ah, I am wrong, am I? Who says I am wrong? No one but you, whose conscience has been pricked by the truths I have uttered! I tell you the manipulation of the money market by the capitalists is the cause of this thing. Here comes the worst financial depression of the century; hundreds—thousands of honest men are driven into absolute beggarden. As I told you before, five men out of every hundred in the United States are out of employment, many of them homeless—wandering from house to house—from village to village seeking work—but there is no work; so they must beg, and if they cannot get bread, what must they do but steal?"

The speaker paused for breath and his opponent thrust him again before he could begin, with that quiet sneering voice :

“ I said you are not out of the kindergarten, and should not discuss things of which you know nothing.”

The man who spoke these words was stretched out full length in an easy chair, his feet in another, the steel-grey eyes looked straight at his antagonist ; the calm insolence of the look was as bad as the words. The clean-shaven face, the heavy jaw, and thin lips showed intellect and depravity in equal proportions. A man capable of heroism and excellent acts, or of baseness that stalks close to the verge of crime ; the face of one who was ripe for treason, conspiracy, and spoils. Such individuals are often seen in club-rooms or about the fashionable hotels. They toil not, neither do they spin, but they are well clothed. Of few words, self-contained, polite to strangers ; but somehow children never confide in them.

Yet the man had a suggestion of culture that the club *habitué* is not apt to possess. He looked like a combination of brigand and archbishop. This man perhaps had virtues, but they were like stars, for they shone out of a black background.

He arose, lit a cigarette, took a few leisurely puffs, and then sat down again as before.

With his feet on the chair, and holding his cigarette between his fingers, he continued to look straight at the clergyman. His silence cut deeper than his language. The rector's clerical collar seemed

to be strangling him—he grew purple in the face and started toward the door—then paused, and in a voice trembling with the emotion which he endeavored to suppress, he said :

“ I am in your house—here on your invitation—I have read a paper on a certain economic topic—the greatest subject of the time—the struggle between those who have and those who have not. In treating this subject I have spoken what I thought was truth, believing that you and other wealthy members of this club were men enough to listen to truth without making a personal issue of it ; now what is the result ? While several members have intelligently discussed my paper, you content yourself with a flat contradiction of my statements. Gentlemen, I bid you good-night.”

“ Hold on, Burtis—not yet—just a moment, please—don’t leave that way,” called several voices in chorus.

One man ran after the fast vanishing clergyman, and seizing him by the arm just as he was about to pass out of the hall door, whispered to him that Mr. Hillard wanted to apologize. Leading the rector back, in a tone a little too loud and laughing for sincerity, he said : “ Here you are now, Hillard, I caught him for you, you see—now apologize for your insolence !—Ring that bell, fool,—let ’s have a quiet smoke and a nightcap, and then we will all sing *Auld Lang Syne* and go home to dream out a scheme for relieving the down-trodden millions.—Here, James, Mr. Hillard says to bring in a box of those best cigars, the decanter of Burgundy, and the siphon of soda.—Oh ! bother your apology, Hillard, they are

devilish awkward things anyway—I want to ask the dominie a few questions about his paper—I'm going to make a synopsis of it for to-morrow morning's issue. You are no teetotaler, Mr. Burtis? It's the Methodists who are daft on prohibition—I'm glad to see the Church of England clergy on the side of sense, as they always are. Good things are for use—moderate, healthful, and intelligent use——”

“I really have duties at home I should attend to,” protested the clergyman, “but of course I do not—ah—wish to be rude,—and as you insist on publishing a synopsis of my address—ah—of course I could not be so ungentlemanly as to refuse the information you desire. The public at large of course look to the newspapers for the truth——”

The rector had now taken his seat at the table; he refused the wine, but was holding an unlighted cigar between his fingers. The man who had brought him back had whipped out a note-book and was making a bustling show of sharpening a lead pencil. “Now let me see—you say there are fifty-five—thousand—men now in the United States homeless, seeking bread from door to door?”

“Yes, that is what I said—outcasts—society's Ishmaelites, every man's hands turned against them—laws being passed to imprison them. Think of it, gentlemen—think of it! Homeless and hungry! searching for work that they may maintain the loved ones whom they have left behind.”

“The — average — age — is — twenty — seven — years?” inquiringly added Mr. White, writing.

“Yes, that is what the registers at the lodging-houses show.”

“ Strong—and—heartly,—well—able—to—work?”

“ Yes, hearty and robust with hardly an exception. I visited the Bethel Home in New York last winter, and talked with many of the poor men who were compelled temporarily to accept charity from the hands of Christian people. One man told me, with tears in his eyes, how he had walked clear from Chicago looking for work, and of how farmers had set their dogs on him, policemen had warned him to leave town, women where he applied for a crust had thrown dish-water on him. Disgrace, contumely, and insult was his greeting everywhere. Is this the spirit of brotherhood we read of? Oh! it is a shame, brethren—a shame!”

Hillard still lay back in his chair and silently smiled and smoked; he had not uttered a syllable since the clergyman had so abruptly started for the door. He now knocked the ashes off from his cigarette, examined the fire critically, and relieved himself as follows:

“ You see, gentlemen, the rector views this subject from his own side, and not from the side of the vagabond. For Mr. Burtis to be suddenly thrust out, and be compelled to beg or steal in order to keep from starving, would indeed be very pitiable; but God bless you, it is no hardship for these ‘roadsters’ who do this sort of thing. They tramp because they like it. Generally they follow this life from choice; they do not want work. They may be dislodged from their accustomed places by a financial high wind, to be sure, but they are only blown in the direction of their desires. They go to liberty, not to

banishment. And this talk of their being separated from their loved ones is pure nonsense. They have no loved ones. It is only the working of the law of attraction. We move toward the thing that attracts, not away from it. The careless life of the tramp—without responsibilities, full of diversion and adventure, without danger to speak of, is, after all, for a certain class of men an attractive thing.”

Mr. White probably knew as much about the true philosophy of society as either the clergyman or Mr. Hillard. He had positive ideas, but he never forced them on others. He would argue with a man and seemingly give in by saying, “Well, possibly you are right,” when he saw that the talk had gone far enough. But now he felt that the clergyman whom they had invited here had not been courteously treated; and what he wanted was simply to make peace and let the rector down and out without loss of dignity. And after all here was Hillard trying to fan the coals into flame again!

“A certain class,” echoed Mr. White.

“Yes.”

“It strikes me that you belong to a certain class.”

“Of vagabonds?”

“Yes, if you want it so.”

“Possibly: well?”

“You do not work,” put in the clergyman, now gaining courage as he felt Mr. White was backing him.

“True.”

“You have no responsibilities.”

“My father’s executor looks after that.”

"You fill your life with adventures of various kinds to kill time and drive away *ennui*!"

"I sail a yacht, play polo, and attend an occasional prize fight!"

"You eat the bread that others earn by the sweat of their brow."

"Indeed!"

"Having never worked you have no sympathy with the poorer classes."

"It is a fact, I never did a day's work."

"You have no family ties."

"None that I parade; proceed."

"If you should suddenly have your income withdrawn, what in heaven's name would become of you?"

"I would still lead a life of pleasure."

"How?"

"I would become a tramp."

The round of laughter that greeted this last remark was genuine.

"You say 'what you would do.' How often have we heard you declare that no man could tell what he would do until the thing came to pass!"

"Well?"

"So say I, well?"

"I have tried it."

"Tried what?"

"Tramping."

"You!!"

"Yes—for six months at a time."

"When?"

"When you thought I was in Paris last summer."

"Hold on there, Ananias."

"Fact!!"

"Of all the liars!"

"I am speaking truth."

"I am quite a fabricator myself, but I resign all honors."

"Believe it or not—what care I: I left Boston last May with ten cents in my pocket and no more. I came back in November with a quarter, and never enjoyed a summer better."

"But you had money with you, so if necessary you could fall back on it?"

"Yes, of course, as I told you I took ten cents."

"And how much more?"

"Not a cent, I was a tramp. To have taken money with me would have only been playing at the business, as children play keep store. I wanted to know the pleasures of the road, and I wanted to know its hardships, privations, and difficulties. All men have difficulties. When the pleasures outweigh them you call the man happy. The tramp's pleasures outweigh his troubles."

"If it was not for blackening the reputation of my paper for veracity, I would write the story up."

"It would be no 'scoop.'"

"Why?"

"Did you not read of how the New York *Herald* hired a man to make a month's trip as a tramp, and of how he wrote up the subject?"

"Yes, and they say the fellow liked the job so well that he resigned his position on the paper and took to the road."

"Only partially right—I never had a position on the paper."

"Or as a tramp."

"I tell you I did."

"Well, we will believe it—as a favor."

"I ask no favor, but seeing you have put me so on the cross-examination, I will tell you: I was bluffed into working my way to St. Louis and back, by Bennett. It was all over a bottle of wine. I made the trip stealing rides and begging my way, and got back in three weeks. The *Herald* paid me two hundred dollars for the articles I sent them. Of course they did not publish my name. When I started I expected to have a hard time of it, but there was so much fun in it that when I returned, I just gave that two hundred dollars to an orphan asylum and started off on a six months' cruise as a tramp."

"It were base flattery to call him liar."

Mr. White—standing with mock gravity—"Gentlemen—I propose you the health of Mr. John Hillard, the king of tramps."

(A voice) "Or of liars!"

"I stand corrected, the king of tramps or of liars, we do not know which."

All drink,—loud laughter with bravos for Hillard, etc., etc. All shake hands with the host and depart.



CHAPTER II.

"Sir, fare you well. Hereafter in another and better world than this, . . ."

FIVE weeks had elapsed since the meeting last described ; Mr. White and Mr. Jones were talking to the Rev. Algernon Burtis after the choir rehearsal at the rectory.

"Disappeared and no one knows where—you don't tell me !" exclaims the clergyman.

"Yes, and did not even take a valise—much less a trunk."

"And it is now ten days?"

"Ten days. He discharged his valet, gave the key of his rooms to the janitor, and said good-bye to no one."

"Have the police been notified?"

"No, but I intend to see them to-night."

"You called on his bankers?"

"Yes, it seems he saw the executor of his father's estate the day he left. Hillard told him simply to take care of his funds until he returned—that he would need no money soon."

"It can't be suicide—he had everything which a man needs. Think of it, an income of eight

thousand dollars a year, and no one but himself to support. Look here, gentlemen——”

“Well?”

Mr. Jones peered around cautiously—winked one eye, placed one hand alongside of his mouth, and in a lowered voice, said:

“A woman.”

“What?”

“A woman, I say.”

“What woman?”

“How should I know—a handsome one, bewitching, petite, stylish, and a smart one no doubt. Do not trouble yourself about Hillard—he will come around next week and tell you how he has been down to the country to see his uncle. Oh, you bachelors are a sly lot!”

Mr. Jones nodded his head and smiled knowingly as a man always does when he is inwardly congratulating himself on his insight.

“That is all right, Mr. Jones, but I told you the man did not even take a clean collar.”

“Who cares—he forgot to—you can buy collars and cuffs anywhere, if not turn the old ones.”

“Yes, but he took no money.”

“Well, the girl has money probably.”

“But he left his watch.”

“No man wants to think of time on such an occasion.”

“He even discharged his valet.”

“An economical fit struck him.”

“My friend, you are wrong,” quietly put in Mr. White, who up to this time had stood near, merely

listening to the conversation. "You are wrong for once. You remember the loud talk we had at the meeting of the Society for the study of Social Problems?"

"Yes, when Hillard insulted me," exclaimed the rector.

"Well, Hillard told us what we thought was a great lie, about his once having been a tramp."

"Yes, but the fellow always had a way of making the most astounding statements without a smile—just to see what folks would say, I suppose."

"Gentlemen, it occurs to me that he told the truth on that occasion."

"And do you think he has turned tramp again?"

"The metaphysicians say that a man who has done a thing once will do it again."

"That's so—'men who fail in business once will surely fail again' is an axiom among bankers;—the act is shorn of its terrors."

"And do you really think that trampism is shorn of its terrors for this man and that he sees something attractive in it?"

"Possibly; there is no output for his powers here—he does not have to exercise his wits at all. His income is secure; he gambles a little, reads a little, hears a few lectures, and he once wrote a sloppy novel with a sociological moral."

"No one ever exactly found the moral."

"True, and Hillard fell back and found consolation in the thought that good things always go 'a begging.'"

"Yes, he was a little sour on society. Men who

have too much are as discontented as those who have too little."

"Then you figure that a rich man might turn tramp for the same reason that a poor one would?"

"Not exactly that; but you know Hillard claimed that the tramp did not want to find work; so in this the tramp resembles a man who is rich."

"Precisely; it is the law of antithesis."

"The opposites of things look alike?"

"You have it."

The clergyman sat thoughtful. He wrinkled his brow, he sighed, he was sore perplexed. He could not possibly conjecture why a man should leave a luxurious home and all the comforts that money could procure and make himself a vagabond. "If Hillard has done this thing he is insane," he said.

"Yes, but we are all a trifle touched; men penetrate the wilds of wildernesses, cross deserts, go to the north pole; aye, a white woman has recently made a journey alone through Africa."

"But all this for the benefit of science?"

"For self-gratification first and science afterward."

"And you argue that there are wilds in our social life which men traverse simply for the cause of science too?"

"Exactly so."

"But this thing of an educated man—a Yale graduate deliberately becoming an outcast is beyond me. If he has done this he is insane, and I will feel it my duty to notify the police, that he may be properly cared for; but I believe it is twice as likely,

yes, a hundred times as probable, that he has committed suicide."

"He drinks, does he not?"

"Why, of course, but seldom to excess!"

"Seldom, you say?"

"Yes; you see he is a man of strong will, he can drink or let it alone."

"I see, but men who can drink or let it alone never let it alone. Liquor produces strange disturbances in men's moral natures. You cannot calculate on the actions of a drinking man; he may carry himself sanely and he may not."

Mr. Burtis accompanied his two friends to the door, and added:

"Well, I will go to the morgue in the morning; I have a feeling that I will find him there. It makes me shiver to think of it. You remember that grewsome verse of Browning's:

'What fancy was it turned your brain?

Oh, women were the prize for you!

Money gets women; cards and dice

Get money, and ill-luck gets just

The copper couch and one clear, nice,

Cool squirt of water o'er your bust,

The right thing to extinguish lust!'"



BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

"O, how full of briars is this working-day world."

OUR scene shifts. Travelling one thousand miles towards the setting sun from New York City will bring us to the centre of population of the United States, a point twenty-five miles from the city of Indianapolis.

The geographical centre of the great republic is in southeastern Kansas, where it will likely remain for many years to come. It is marked by a plain rugged piece of granite as is becoming. The hub of the universe was once the gilded dome of the State House at Boston, but citizens of Chicago maintain that times have changed. We have not space here to go into the issues of the case, but this we do know, that the centre of population in 1830 was at Philadelphia. Some years it has travelled fast, others slow. It is now crawling to the west at the rate of nine hundred and seventy feet a year.

Twenty-five miles west from Indianapolis on the line of the I. B. & W. R. R., is the town of Lizton. The station (or the depot as the people there call it)

is a dreary place where the wind howls through the telegraph wires and whistles around the corners. Dust and dirt in summer, mud, slush, and snow in winter.

In cold weather, the big "Volcano" stove in the middle of the waiting-room roasts the faces, burns the boots, and scorches the clothing of those who try to warm themselves in its hypocritical vicinity. People who prefer to sit back on the benches by the windows get the benefit of the breeze that comes joyously in through the rattling sash and the broken pane, where a time-table fights with the wind. Boreas holds a railway depot in perfect contempt.

The station in a country place is where the loafers most do congregate. The city loafer is a saint compared with the rustic article. The rustic only hunts in crowds; alone he is as timid as a sheep. In the company of his kind his insolence is colossal. Country clergymen believe in the total depravity of the young. They have reason.

The loafers along the line of the I. B. & W. R. R. excelled in all manner of rural rascality. They were neither men nor boys—not big enough to knock down, yet too large to spank.

An hour before the eight o'clock passenger train came along at Lizton in the evening they were on hand. They pushed the grain cars past the elevator shute, they stole the links and hid the pins in cob piles. With a crowbar they started the lumber cars to a point dangerously near the curve in the switch. They set the brakes so tight with the aid of levers that the trainmen had difficulty to let them

off. They played hide-and-seek through the waiting-room and under the station, in the corn-cribs, and freight cars. And at the stock-yards, where the hogs and cattle were loaded, they once turned three lots of hogs together, and the owners had a lawsuit in consequence. These loafers whittled the benches, spat on the stove, jammed the poker through the floor, made pictures on the wall, wrote doggerel on the door.

A sign over the ticket window read :

.....
: Men are requested not to smoke in this room. :
: Gentlemen will not. :
.....

This was decorated with various "cuds" of tobacco, evidently thrown by gentlemen sitting on the bench at the opposite side of the room, as some of the missiles had shot wide of the target. There they stuck, a monument to some one's bad marksmanship.

When the train came, these loafers met it at the water-tank and boarded every step. The more daring chased each other through the coaches. One barefoot, freckled youth, as big as a man, on being ordered off by the conductor, once protested: "I won't git run'd over, I won't."

"I do not care if you do," was the answer.

They stood in the passengers' way, made remarks to the women, mimicked the men, pulled the ears of little boys, jostled the girls.

Complaints kept pouring in to the General Superintendent's office from all along the line about the gangs that infested the depots.

The complaints came from patrons of the road, not from the agents. These patrons thought their town the only one thus scourged. They did not know that the publication of Darwin's book was hastened because the author accidentally found that a German thinker who never heard of Darwin had written the same things; that all great discoveries and inventions are evolved in different parts of the world about the same time; that thought is in the air, and is free to all that can seize it; that certain conditions produce certain results; that the springs of action are general, not particular; that the spores of everything exist everywhere, and when conditions are right a crop is sure; that a Spitz dog is a representative of all other Spitz dogs. In short, that a loafer in Lizton is only a specimen—a type of the great Genus *Loafer Rusticus*.

The General Superintendent knew these things, probably, although he had no time to philosophize over them; the stockholders did not want philosophy, they demanded dividends. If the dividends were not forthcoming they requested the head of the General Superintendent on a charger.

On Oct. 15, 1885, the C. B. & Q., the Illinois Central, and the I. B. & W. each made a shift of agents at nearly every station on its respective line. And at the same time issued a warning to all loafers, idlers, and tramps to keep away from its property.

This change was to make it easier for the agent to carry out the order. After a man has lived in a country village for a year, unless he is a very positive character, he will be only Bill, Joe, Jim, or Dick, as

the case may be. It is what the scientists call the law of "Reversion to Type." Simplified, it means there is a very strong tendency for everybody to become like everybody else. This accounts for society's motto, gotten from Donnybrook Fair: "Wherever you see a head, hit it." It is only the working out of the social law which tends to pull every one down to one common level.

So after a station agent has been in one place a certain length of time, the law of Reversion to Type (which is much more rapid in its action in villages than elsewhere) pulls him down to the common level, and his cap with the gilt band no longer inspires awe.

The neighbors lounged in the station, reached over the half-door that separated the agent's office from the waiting-room, unfastened the spring lock, walked in, sat down, and read the *Weekly Times* or the *Ledger*. They "monkeyed" with the telegraph apparatus—knew which key to touch in order to get a mild electric shock; read the way-bills, made comments on the tracers, and kept themselves fully informed as to what was "short" and what was "over." They read all correspondence, inspected all express packages, examined the letterpress sheets, appropriated lead pencils, smoked the agent's pipe, tested the pens, tried his tobacco, and discussed the telegrams.

A large amount of the village correspondence was carried on with letter-heads and envelopes marked R. R. B. The only thing sacred to the agent was the ticket-case and money-drawer; and he was not always dead-sure as to the latter.

Yet these friendly neighbors were not bad people—far from it, kind and accommodating. They helped switch the cars, carried telegraph messages, handled the baggage. When the way freight came in, some of them were always on hand to give a lift.

They knew the conductors, joked with the brakemen, played checkers with the agent. The children of these friendly neighbors were the loafers who made the trouble.





CHAPTER II.

*“ If ever you have looked on better days ;
If ever been where bells have knolled to church ;
If ever sat at any good man’s feast ;
If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear,
And known what’t is to pity and be pitied,
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be.”*

IT was near nine o’clock, and Mr. Puddefoote, the agent at Lizton, was just completing his second day at the new charge.

The warnings posted on the station walls, inside and out, had been duly respected. They were probably respected for a full week. The sight of the agent’s revolver—unloaded—lying on the table near the telegraph-key helped things.

Then the printed notices were headed : Warning!!! Three exclamation-points inspire very much more terror than one.

The passengers had gone through, but the agent could not leave until he had given orders to Number Nine, the fast freight. Why it was called “fast” no one ever knew.

“Where is Number Nine?” He ticked the question off to the agent at Pittsboro, the second station east.

"Left here a half hour ago with a hot-box. I knew it would get to smoking again going down the grade. Say, have you kept the loafers out?"

"You bet."

He took up his last copy of the *New York Weekly*, but could not find the place where he left off in the hair-lifting story. Then he reached up and took down a violin that was on the ticket case; he started to play, but the thing seemed only to shriek an accompaniment to the howling of the wind, and the noise echoed through the high, hollow room like the moan of a lost soul. The new agent had never heard the moan of a lost soul, but he had his ideas.

It had been raining all day—the rain had now turned to sleet, and the wind dashed it angrily against the windows that rattled in the casements.

Mr. Puddefoote placed his face close to the window, and putting a hand each side of his eyes, he gazed out into the darkness up the track that stretched straight out to the east; no headlight in sight. He sat down and picked up the paper again; but instead of reading, he turned his head on one side and listened. He thought he heard a step in the waiting-room outside.

The first fire of the year was in the "Volcano" stove, but no lamp was in the room. The stove threw out long, fitful streaks of light that made grim dancing pictures on the wall. The bright light in front of the telegraph instrument made it difficult for the operator to see clearly as he peered out of the half open door into the waiting-room; but after

an instant he made out a figure standing by the stove.

He had been startled. Silence startles. A stealthy footstep will often produce more agitation than an explosion. But when we make out the dread figure, and recognize the youngster who has jumped out from behind a corner with a loud "boo!!" we want to kick him.

Railroad station agents are but clay. The "boo!" was of the silent sort, and wholly innocent, but Mr. Puddefoote recognized the form standing by the stove. He wanted to kick it.

"Now, what the devil are you doing here again; did n't I tell you to keep out?"

"I am cold, and my clothes are wet," came back a hesitating childish voice.

"Well, go home; here you have been hanging around since five o'clock, and this is the fourth time I have told you to git."

No answer. The figure stood still.

"Did you hear?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, why don't you mind?"

"I will in a minute, please."

"Go home, and go now. Did n't I show you the warning to loafers?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then git for home."

"I have no home, please, sir!"

Let us here open the stove door, so as to get a little more light, and we will take a look at this boy. He certainly was not over twelve years old, but

rather tall and slender. He wore a man's boots, and a pair of overalls, straw hat, and the coat must have been his Sunday best when he was eight years old, for the sleeves came only half way to the elbow.

The hands were calloused, full of cracks, and the long wrists showed red and chapped. He held his hands up to warm them, and seemed to half crouch over the stove, evidently trying to absorb a good deal of heat in a short time, for all the while he looked furtively in the direction of the clicking telegraph instrument. His manner showed that he expected a strong man would rush forth and pitch him out into the darkness.

The boy was a stranger in a strange land,—that was sure. He had the half-frightened look that told he was unused to the surroundings.

Mr. Puddefoote should have seen this—but railroad agents have the privilege of being dull,—he had orders to keep the loafers away, and he would begin on this one.

Is innocence a sufficient shield?

Not always.

“You have no home, eh! Don't lie to me, kid, I'll come out there and break every bone in your body.”

Perhaps the man assumed a fury he did not feel, but he sprang from his chair intending to seize the boy by the collar, and kick him out. He was big; the boy was small. Mr. Puddefoote felt fully equal to the task of kicking him out. He had nearly reached the child, when a heavy footstep was heard behind, and a voice that would have been

cheery were it not for the tinge of guttural, sang out :

“Ah ! you are the new agent—glad to greet you. I did not have time to call before—business prevented—I hope you are well. Say ! what time does the nine o'clock train go ?”

These words came out in a single mouthful without pause or inflection ; and they ceased as suddenly as they began. They were polite words, although not exactly “apples of gold in pitchers of silver,” for as they died away there was a suggestion of slur, sneer, and insincerity that robbed the greeting of its goodfellowship.

At the sound of the voice the station agent turned, and if he had before been startled at the sight of the boy's figure, he was now positively frightened at the sight of this. One glance was enough—he did not seize the child—he changed his mind. He walked right past him to a scuttle of coal, and made a noisy pretence of fixing the fire.

We said that the voice of the man who had spoken ceased abruptly. He now stood with back to the stove—feet wide apart, and coat-tails parted. He said nothing, but he stared straight at the agent. That stare, stony, cold, and threatening, hastened Mr. Puddefoote's movements more than words could have done. He answered not, but after slamming down the coal scuttle and dropping the poker, he made haste to get inside his office and close the door.

The spring lock shut with a snap.



" SAY, WHAT TIME DOES THE NINE O'CLOCK TRAIN GO ? "

See page 26.



CHAPTER III.

"Unclaimed of any man. But who comes here?"

WHILE this man is standing, back to the stove, staring at the closed door that leads into the operator's room, we in our turn will take a look at him.

He is a tramp of the tramps, beyond the ghost of a doubt, for the man who sleeps in the clothes he wears during the day, can never disguise the fact. This is not a large man, but there is a suggestion of the aldermanic about his goodly front. Twenty-eight—possibly thirty years of age. His round red face is covered with a three weeks' growth of red bristles, the beard growing thick high up on his cheeks, giving him a gorilla-like look of ferocity. His shoes are sadly run down and turned over at the heels, making the toes turn up. The pantaloons are held in place by a piece of rope knotted at a point to the southwest of the "umbilical region," as the doctors might say. He wears a cheap cotton shirt, next comes a long Prince Albert coat, over this a cutaway, then a light-colored sack coat much shorter than the others.

Good taste would suggest the wearing of the longest coat on the outside, but the width of the garments across the shoulders compel the order we have named. These coats are all unbuttoned; and the buttons being off from the shirt, show the short bull neck and the hairy breast of a Hercules. On his head he wore, jauntily cocked over one eye, a battered high hat with a band of mourning about it. As he stands with back to the stove, his hands are in his pockets; held beneath his right arm is a short knotted cudgel. When he spoke the agent noticed the voice and accent were those of a gentleman and singularly out of keeping with his appearance.

The man is bow-legged and this is the only blemish on his splendid physique.

Knock-knees are a deformity; bow-legs an accident.

Bow-legs come from courage and strong will: the child insists on walking before cartilage has ossified—that's all. Men with knock-knees are weak, vacillating, cowardly. Where you want courage to rashness, hope that is deathless, and a will that may bend but never break, place your money on the bow-legged man. Hounds have knock-knees; bulldogs are bow-legged.

Charles the First was knock-kneed; Cromwell (like Cæsar) had bow-legs.





CHAPTER IV.

*"He that doth the ravens feed,
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow."*

THIS tramp had come leisurely walking, hands in pockets, down the railroad track to the depot. When he got to the door he heard the high-pitched voice of the telegraph operator. He recognized it as an angry voice; if there was going to be a row he wanted to be on hand.

He did not want to stop the progress of a quarrel by calling attention to himself; his entrance might spoil it all you know; let the pot boil.

This man considered himself a seeker after truth. He argued that curiosity was the mother of knowledge. He aimed to secure truth direct. Many curious things had he seen through keyholes, much wisdom had he acquired sitting beneath windows or lying in high grass.

But just as he was laying a dirty ear to the key-hole he heard the agent spring from his chair and—in he walked. This tramp always sided with the weak, his sympathies were with the under dog, his motto was Protection; he protected everything that needed protection and some things that did not.

Possibly he would protect the under dog just for the satisfaction of whipping it himself, but we cannot say positively as to this.

When he stepped into that waiting-room he had no idea of who or what it was that needed protection, but it made no difference. "Justice, justice though the heavens fall," he said to himself. It did n't mean much, it was only one of his pet sayings.

You have already seen how this railroad agent—long, lean, bony—a foot taller than our tramp, made haste to get into a place of safety.

"The wishes of a stout tramp with a knotty club command more respect than do those of a virtuous citizen with a consumptive cough and a sandy goatee," said our tramp to himself as he still stood with his back to the stove. The child was on the other side.

"Well?" said the tramp, gruffly.

"I am going now," plaintively came the trembling voice; "I only wanted to get warm."

"Hold on, I want to talk with you."

"Please sir, I did n't mean to—I did n't know it was against the rules."

"Did n't, eh?—plain enough, aint they?—'No loafers or tramps allowed around this building.'"

"I won't do it again, sir, please."

The child began to cry and sidled off toward the door.

"Now, kid, none of the briny, for God's sake—it makes me nervous; I have the heart disease, and might turn up my toes right here and it's against the rules you know."



"NOW THEN, KID, NONE OF THE BRINY."

See page 30.

The man walked over and as he took the child by the arm, exclaimed: "Holy snakes, what are you—Barnum's living skeleton? Why, brat, no wonder you were cold—your duds are wet with the rain—you had better be naked and be done with it. Nothing on under those overalls and your coat is made of mosquito netting—no stockings, I'll bet, and got on your daddy's boots with all the holes. Why did n't you bring the holes and leave the boots at home?"

"Please, sir, let me go." The boy tried to wriggle away.

"By the great Horn Spoons! This is a fine social system; the kid is starving, that's what."

The man was going through contortions trying to get a package out of the tail pocket of the Prince Albert.

"Here now what do you say to this?" and he began unwrapping something that proved to be a quarter section of thick home-made mince pie.

The pie had been sat on, and when the newspaper was removed a fine imprint of a New York *Tribune* editorial was plainly visible across the top. The child did not stop to read the editorial, excellent though it doubtless was; he reached for the pie and ate ravenously, then the two sat down on the bench, back by the wall, in the dull light of the red-hot stove. The tramp reached down into his open shirt. A package was fished up. "No, that's my tobacco." Another, "And that's sausage, but 't aint cooked. We must look out for trichina. Once more,—here she is—bread and meat. I came near throwing it away, but Providence stayed my arm."

The child sat and munched the bread and meat. It was warm from the man's body, but when we are hungry we are not fastidious. The tramp got a tin cup of water from the wooden pail in the corner, and setting the cup on the flat top of the hot stove it was soon steaming. Then he produced from the mysterious depths of his shirt a package of tea, and sprinkling a proper quantity in the tin cup he stirred it with his knife.

The boy drank, and then the tramp made a cup of tea for himself. Instead of putting the empty cup back where he got it by the water pail he dropped it inside of his shirt and did the same with a piece of soap that lay on the shelf by the bucket, all without saying a word. What use has a tramp for soap?

It was now plain why he did not button his coats ; the shirt was filled with a whole kitchen outfit of divers and sundry useful articles.

"I 'm an Olympian Seer from Sandusky," said the tramp. "I can look right through anything. I look at a man and I know what he has had for breakfast. I saw you had n't eaten anything since yesterday. I can read the mind, too. I know your thoughts—you have run away ; do not answer, I know all about it. It 's the wrong Social System, that 's what. I 'll help you on Number Nine when she comes ; I 'm waiting here for her too, but you 'll freeze, kid.—Here."

The tramp stood up and with a few gyrations all so quick that the eye could scarcely follow he whipped off his pantaloons. To the boy's surprise the taking

off of the trousers made no difference in his appearance ; he probably had on three pairs more.

“ Here, Jimmy, get into these, quick.”

The pantaloons came up around the child's arm-pits. A strong string was brought up out of the inside of that shirt and quickly a buttonhole was knotted in each end and the man buttoned the improvised suspenders over the shoulders of the lad, and stooping he turned up the bottoms, saying : “ They call 'em a pair of trousers ; why a pair, that's what I want to know. A coat has two sleeves but we do not call it a pair of coats. If a man wore no pants society would call it singular, but to me it is singular that pants are plural.”

He pulled off two coats and stood in the Prince Albert. Not many of us have the bust to do justice to a Prince Albert : this man had. His earthly tabernacle would have delighted the eye of a tailor. Removing the coat he put it on the boy and buttoned it up about him, turning up the sleeves. The coat came nearly to the child's feet.

The door with the spring lock here opened cautiously and the station agent looked out.

“ Boys, you will have to go now, I 'm going to lock up for the night.”

The voice was needlessly loud but civil ; yet the child trembled and his hand blindly felt for the hand of his new-found friend ; it was a curious move for a twelve-year-old lad.

“ You can't shut up shop till Number Nine comes, lunatic,” gruffly replied the tramp.

“ Can't, eh ? ”

"No."

"What do you know about it?"

"Come off, now, Puddefoote."

"How do you know my name?"

"Fool, don't you know me?"

"No, and I don't want to. What's your name?"

"Whiskers!"

"His Whiskers? Well as I'm a sinner so it is! Shake, I did not know you."

"My son, Mr. Puddefoote, Mr. Puddefoote, my son, Mr. Jimmy Whiskers, just out of boarding-school and taking his vacation."

The agent shook hands with the boy and laughed aloud at his appearance.

"Well, I might a knowed it, you fellows go in gangs; I would have asked the young man in if I had thought he was your boy."

It is always easy to forgive our enemies when we cannot crush them.

"Where is Old Number Nine, anyway?" asked His Whiskers.

"Oh! a hot box. She may not be here for an hour; come in the office, both of you."

The tramp and the boy followed the man into the little room and took chairs by the baby volcano that was sending out a cheerful glow.

"By the way, Whiskers, you have not forgotten how to play the fiddle?"

The tramp sat silent looking into the fire; he made no answer.

The agent took the instrument off from the top of the ticket case and handed it the man. He

placed the violin against his bared throat; he caressed it as though it were a thing of life. He played. It was a master hand that held the bow.

In a strong, clear, baritone, accompanying himself on the instrument, the tramp sang, *Home, Sweet Home.*





CHAPTER V.

"It is a melancholy of mine own."

"**I**T makes me homesick," said the agent ; " why do you always sing that thing ; you have no home ! "

" Pud, you have mental myopia and you wear a six and a half hat, or you would not ask. John Howard Payne, the man who wrote it, had no home. We sing and write poems of the things that are not ours. We talk most of the virtues we do not possess ; men write poems to their sweethearts, not their wives. No man appreciates that which is wholly his own. We never appreciate a jewel until it is lost. Don't ask me foolish questions, man—let me give up my spirit to music—divine music."

The tramp took off his hat, closed his eyes, and leaning back in his chair, imitated on the violin the sighing of the wind and the beating rain. Then he stopped, and still holding the instrument, exclaimed :

" Do you know, Pud, this old fiddle allows me to give an expression to my feelings such as I have not known for months !

" Expression is necessary to life. Expectoration of a thought is a solace. The wolf howls, the dog

barks, the birds sing, and when a woman is in love she sighs. But with me it is a violin that brings relief.

“The violin has a soul; it sympathizes with one like a sweet and loving woman: that is the reason the player holds it so close to his heart.

“It is human.

“The violin is so in sympathy with the player, that it knows his gentlest emotion—the merest breath of feeling that ripples across his soul—all is taken up and echoed by it. It knows his longings, his joys, his hopes, his ambitions, his fears.

“Once there was a splendid woman who loved me—you doubt it, but it is truth. She loved me; I was unworthy of her. I would not blight her life by marrying her, but I did the next thing worse: I trod on her heart and wiped my feet on her honor.

“This woman played the violin divinely. She played divinely because she had suffered. Her heart had been wrung! No musician can excel until he has had a baptism of fire.

“The last night I saw this girl she played for me on her violin. It was after midnight. She knew she would never see me again, yet she was gay. It was the gayety that has in it the rattle of death.

“‘Come, let me tell the story of your life on the violin,’ she said.

“She played.

“Slowly, gently, lightly, she touched the responsive instrument. There were tones that kissed; pouting, they eluded one another, then intertwined, became one, and danced away drunk with joy. Then

they came romping back like butterflies that play hide-and-seek amid flowers where the sunbeams keep guard.

“There were melodies such as the nightingale sings in the twilight of dewy dawn, when the perfume of coming flowers fills her yearning heart with the promise of spring.

“These notes of passion merged gradually into a long, low, swelling strain of melody. There was gentlest harmony, broken now and then, only, with the suggestion of a harmonious discord; loud, clear, deep, swelling, peaceful harmony that rose and fell like the waves of a summer sea.

“Suddenly there was a change—had a string snapped? No, but the harmony was lost. In its place came sad, sighing, reproachful tones suggestive of stealthily approaching footsteps; footsteps with a tread soft, tortuous, menacing: footsteps of a spy, footsteps of a midnight executioner, footsteps of an assassin.

“There were notes that told of pleading, then of despair, utter, black despair.

“The lamps in the room seemed to go out. It was dark.

“The weird light of the moon stole in and the pale rays fell on the girl's form. She seemed to be swaying and writhing with pain, fearful pain, as she played. She looked as if trying to give utterance to some charm that would act as a spell and give deliverance to the fettered demons that live down under the sea. Madly, stubbornly, she hugged the shrieking violin to her bosom.

“ There were screams, shrieks, crashes, groans of pain, sighs of terror, fearful sobs. There were sounds which, if heard by the saints of God, the songs of praise would die on their lips and they would hide their heads in abject fear. Sounds that would cause the dead to creep forth from their graves and raise their bony hands in prayer, thinking the last day had come, and they were about to receive their dread sentence.

“ I turned deadly cold. My teeth chattered and I grasped the chair for support. Merciful Christ! would she never stop! I tried to beg her to cease, but my throat was frozen.

“ Still she played on.

“ My hands were numb. Fumes of sulphur seemed to fill my eyes—my nostrils. I gasped for breath. I felt the cold sweat streaming from my face, but the heat of hell was in my brain. Summoning all my strength I managed to get on my feet, and staggering to the door, stumbled out, down the steps, out into the blackness of the night.

“ I have never seen the girl since.

“ Now as to my fortune : it has wafted me through all the joys of youth, and now brought me to the blessed harmonies of middle life, but somehow I feel that the Nemesis is on my track.

“ What makes you stare, Pud ; you look like a stone image of Rameses the Second—Here, I ’ll thaw you out by playing *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*.—Kee-ristopher! If there aint old Number Nine right at the switch ! ”

The agent made a mad grab for the rope that con-

trolled the semaphore, but it failed to work. He seized his lantern and yelled as he passed out of the door: "I'll swing her up. Run down by the water tank and you can get on. Look out for the conductor—it's Mulligan!"

"Don't worry!" answered the tramp.

He was in no hurry; he placed the violin back in its case, pocketed a lead pencil that lay on the table, took a chew of the agent's tobacco, then turned to the boy.

The child was sound asleep, his head against the wall. The man jammed his hat down over his eyes, gave the boy a shake, and vociferated:

"Here, now, Jimmy, wake up; we must go and claim our berths in the Pullman!"

The boy was too sleepy to open his eyes, but one hand went out, groping blindly for the hand of the one person in all the wide world who he felt was his friend.

Out into the storm they trudged, out into the darkness, down the track, hand in hand.





CHAPTER VI.

"A ragged man o'ergrown with hair lay sleeping on his back."

THE man and boy came near paying for their leisurely movements, for the train was again in motion when they came alongside. His Whiskers (we might as well call him by the name he was known by) lifted the boy so that he could climb up the side of a freight car, and with an easy swing he followed after.

In a few minutes the train was well under way. The wind was blowing a hurricane, and the boy lay flat down on the car, and held tight to the boardwalk that ran along the top to keep from being blown off. His Whiskers stood upright, both hands in his pockets; he had not even taken the trouble to button his coat.

Presently a bobbing light was seen coming up over the tender and on to the top of the train.

"We can't stay here," muttered His Whiskers. He placed his mouth close to the boy's ear and shouted: "I say, kid, the brakeman is coming, we will have to hide."

The roar of the wind, the shower of cinders from

the engine, the driving rain, the swaying cars, and the deafening rumble of the train had terrified the child so that he could not move. He lay across the board-walk, and clutched it in abject helplessness.

The bobbing lantern was now only two cars away.

Putting one arm around the lad the tramp lifted him and swung over the end of the car down the ladder. In an instant the brakeman passed almost directly over their heads, but never saw them. Climbing back on the car His Whiskers laid the boy down, and screamed in his ear: "Do not move, I will be back in a minute."

Over the cars he made his way. The first car was empty. At the next he listened; it was loaded with hogs, he could hear them squeal. The next had cattle, he could tell by the movements. The next was sheep, he knew by the smell. He groped for the trap-door in the top, and was rejoiced to find it unlocked. Going back to the boy, he half carried, half dragged him to the trap-door, and putting him down, supported him by the hands; lowering the child as far as he could reach, he let him drop down among the sheep.

Following after, he closed the door.

"Now I will say my 'Now-I-lay-me,' and sleep the sleep of the innocent. I do not generally care to have the wool pulled over my eyes, this time we will not mind it," said the tramp, as he settled himself down in the warmth of the huddled sheep.

The combined roar of the storm and train made a fearful noise in this car with its reverberating tin roof. This was well, for it drowned the snore of the tramp.

The man was strong enough and thoughtful enough to catch a sheep and hold it for a pillow. The boy could not do this, so the moving about of the animals disturbed him, although their woolly overcoats kept him warm.

The train passed station after station, at some of which it stopped. Then the trainmen could be heard running overhead. The lad could tell when they set the brake on "his car"; he could hear the wheels drag. Every moment he would think, "Now, as soon as he gets through turning the wheel of that brake he will come to the trap-door and demand why I am stealing these sheep. He will seize me by the collar and choke me and take me off to jail. There I shall be kept in a cell on bread and water for weeks and weeks, and perhaps they will wall the cell up, and leave only a little hole to pass food in, and then they will forget me, and I shall starve, or I shall be taken to prison and wear a striped suit, and be only Number 1169, so that I shall forget I ever had a name, and when I get too old to work they will let me out, and then every one will shun me."

But the brakeman never bothered himself about the trap-door; he did not even come to see why the sheep kept up such a bleating. Why did they bleat so? Were they homesick because they were being taken away off they knew not where? Were they calling for help because the train made such an awful noise; or were they hungry? It must be they were hungry; he had been hungry too. Poor sheep; he could sympathize with them, but would they not please keep quiet? this bleating would call

the attention of the conductor, and he would surely come down the trap-door with the lantern, with his name on it, to see what was the matter.

They came to Danville—he knew it was Danville, for he spelt out the name on the station, where there was a flickering, smoky lamp over the door. They stayed at Danville nearly an hour, and changed engines and backed up and down and backward and forward, and they bumped into other cars, and other cars bumped into them. After one bump more severe than any before, His Whiskers came up out of a pile of sheep, and exclaimed angrily: “When I am superintendent of this dam one-horse road the first thing I shall do will be to bounce that Bill Hogan—he can no more handle an engine than a baby.” Then His Whiskers disappeared as suddenly as he had arisen. Men with lanterns ran over the top of the car and down the side, and other men with torches got underneath,—they seemed to be searching for something. Were they looking for a runaway boy?

Finally the train started. The storm had ceased now; the clouds had drifted away. But by and by it grew very dark and the stars all went to bed. Instead of the stars there were lights now and then to be seen,—in farm-houses. Perhaps it was getting towards morning and the folks were getting up. Some one was coming down stairs to make the fire in the kitchen stove. Maybe they had to get up so early because the corn was not all husked or the potatoes not all dug.

There was a faint red tint off in the east. Then great fiery streaks shot up and in a little while it

looked as if a whole town was ablaze miles and miles away. It was nearly daylight.

When the train stopped at a water tank the barking of a dog could be heard and the crowing of roosters. The boy saw a farmer come out of a little house and slap his hands as if it were cold—then walk off toward the barn and a straw stack around which were a drove of cows.

The cows “moohed,” just as his father’s cows did at home—how strange!

The train had started and His Whiskers sat up. His stout form loomed among the sheep, and as his hat was off—could you have seen him, you would have surely said: “There is a black sheep in every flock.” He was combing his beard and hair, with a stump of a comb to get the wool out.

He called to the boy that they would get out at the next station.

His Whiskers climbed up the side of the car and very cautiously put his head out to see if the coast was clear. Then he motioned for the boy to follow. As the train slowed down they climbed to the top of the car and down the side. Just before the train stopped they dropped off to the ground.

The conductor, station agent, and a brakeman stood on the depot platform and saw the man and boy leave the train. The three men watched them as they lazily moved off toward the village. They were debating as to where those tramps had concealed themselves.

His Whiskers knew they were watching him—someway we all can tell when we are being strongly gazed at by some one behind—he turned and politely lifted his hat.



CHAPTER VII.

"How now, wit? whither wander you?"

"I HAVE friends up this way, we will go and call on them," said His Whiskers.

The man seemed to be scanning the gateposts as they walked along. Finally they stopped before a pretty homelike cottage and going into the yard they passed around to the back door. The rap was answered by a tall woman, who had no more than opened the door than she slammed it.

"I had n't time to bid her good-morning," remarked His Whiskers as they walked away.

"Was she a friend of yours?" asked the boy.

The man looked at him. The lad's innocence was his protection.

At the next house the door was held open long enough for the tramp to put his feet in, and he leaned against the casing in a way that prevented a repetition of the slamming.

"Madam, I am a poor man seeking work. I have not tasted food for three days; would you mind giving me from your plentiful store—a mere crust, madam?"

The woman who held the door did not answer, but a gruff, masculine voice from somewhere in the house yelled :

“No-o-o-o, git out!!”

“Madam, excuse me, I bid you good-morning. Will you please tell your husband, with my compliments, that he should not speak so loud, he might rupture a blood-vessel.”

The instant His Whiskers removed his foot the door slammed as if the mere taking away of that foot had released a powerful spring.

The boy was frightened, and refused to go into the next yard, but the man insisted.

Exactly the same formula was gone through here, excepting that there was evidently no man at home.

“No food for three days?” echoed the white-haired motherly woman.

“As I live, madam, and my son here is starving—actually starving as you can see. Here, Jimmy, why don’t you take off your hat, don’t you know a lady when you see one? How often have I told you. You will excuse him, madam,—it is so seldom, so very seldom one meets a perfect lady, and then James never has had the training which only the mother-love can give. Anything you happen to have, madam—do not go to any trouble, I pray you, just a bit of bread and butter, a little piece of meat, and any sauce or jelly you have handy!”

The woman had no meat cooked—the breakfast things were all put away, but she would give them a slice of bread and butter. “Would that do?”

“Certainly, madam, certainly. Jimmy, how often

have I told you never to enter a house, without wiping your feet? You will excuse him, madam, I know you will."

The tramp had pulled the boy in by this time, and they were both comfortably seated in the little kitchen, while the woman was busily engaged cutting the bread and spreading it with butter.

"You will not mind my mentioning it, madam, but you have a good fire in the stove:—fried eggs would be acceptable inasmuch as you have no meat—you were not expecting us of course. I noticed your poultry as we came in and remarked to my son that you must be people of taste to select such beautiful fowls. Plymouth Rocks, are they not! I thought so—the finest hen that ever scratched a flower bed. My ancestors were Plymouth Rocks—that is to say came over in the *Mayflower*. They brought with them the basket of eggs from which this breed of fowls sprang. I never eat anything but Plymouth Rock eggs. Fried on one side only, madam—a little brown, but on one side only."

"The boy does look as if he was starved," said the woman as she put the skillet on the stove and began breaking the eggs in it.

"Yes, madam, you have the true sympathetic heart. You are a mother yourself and you will not mind my telling you—we are both family people—his mother died in giving him birth, and I love the child so that I take him with me rather than trust him among strangers."

"Have you no other children?"

"Yes, madam, six, but they have gone before."



“ FRY THEM ON ONE SIDE, MADAM.”

See page 48.

"Gone where?"

"They are Over There."

"Where is that?"

"On the Other Side."

The man had brought out a big red cotton handkerchief that was in the top of his high hat;—his face was buried in this handkerchief, and he was now rocking to and fro in his chair.

"Oh, you mean they are dead."

"Yes, madam, dead—dead—only me and Jimmy are left of a once happy home.—Fry them on one side, madam, and a trifle brown, if you please," groaned the man.

The woman was touched. She evidently thought the grief sincere.

"I did not mean to hurt your feelings," she said, half apologetically.

"Don't mention it, madam—I forgive you. Have you any coffee you could warm up quickly?"

"No, I have none made."

"Would it be too much trouble to make some?—You have the water hot—I do not care for myself, but my son here is just out of a sick-bed."

"He does not look very strong," said the woman.

"No, madam, when he was a baby only the tender nursing I gave him brought him through."

The woman made the coffee. His Whiskers drank three cups, the boy one. They ate everything in sight but three big cucumber pickles, and as the woman turned her back His Whiskers dropped these down his shirt front.

As the last morsel was disposed of and the chairs

were being pushed back, the man said: "What do you say to the lady, Jimmy?"

"We thank you very much for the breakfast," said the child.

"I *will* bring him up to be polite. Speak the truth and be polite though the heavens fall, I always tell him. Madam, would you mind shaking hands with a poor though honest man?"

The woman did not mind. "Madam, may God bless you, I bid you good-day!"

The tramp lifted his high hat with a flourish as he turned to go.

As the pair passed through the gate His Whiskers looked back; the woman was not watching. He took from his pocket a piece of blue chalk and marked on the gatepost: O X X X.





CHAPTER VIII.

"By my troth, thou sayest true; for since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show."

"WHAT did you make those marks on the gate for?" asked the boy when they had gotten well out of sight of the house.

"Those were for the benefit of poor men seeking work. The cipher meant no dog; the first X stands for bread and butter, the next eggs, the last X stands for coffee, if you insist on it."

They were walking slowly along the road away from the village.

"Where are you going? Let's go back to town—we may be able to get work at the planing mill. Or perhaps some of the stores want a clerk. Oh, if you could get a place as book-keeper and I as errand boy in the same store how nice it would be!"

The child almost clapped his hands at the prospect. A good breakfast is a great inspirer of hope.

"I can't keep books," growled the tramp; "it is too sedentary, my liver aint just right, anyway. I must have outdoor work or nothing."

"Well, you may get a place to drive a team!"

"I am no horseman."

"Or to handle lumber in the lumber yard."

"My spine is weak, I cannot lift."

"Well, I am going back, anyway, and see if I cannot get a job."

The boy stopped. The tramp looked at him and smiled at this show of resolution.

"I'll tell you, Jimmy, we are tired, both of us. We did n't go to bed till midnight, and we did not sleep well either; a woollen comforter is no good—eider down is what I am used to—just plain eider down. Let us just go across the field to that straw stack and get rested up and then we will talk about it."

They made their way across the plowed field to the stack, and the tramp pulled out enough dry straw for a good bed on the sunny side where the wind did not strike. The boy followed his example and lying down was soon sound asleep.

Tired nature had her way.

It must have been four o'clock in the afternoon when the boy awoke. He had not realized how tired he was. The first thing that greeted his gaze as he started up and looked about, was His Whiskers, seated in the straw, calmly smoking a pipe. The boy was horrified. Smoking in a straw stack is dangerous business!

The tramp did not consider it so; leastwise, he was willing to take the chances.

The man took a generous piece of bread and meat out of his shirt front, and handed it to the boy.

As the lad finished munching it, he stood up and said :



“ THEY HAVE GONE BEFORE.”

See page 48.

"Now let us go and find work in the village."

"It is too late—wait until to-morrow; besides that, I aint feeling well. Tell me, did you run away?"

The boy was silent.

"You must speak the truth. Now tell me, did you run away?"

"Why, you said yesterday you could look at any one and tell what they had for breakfast; and that no one's thoughts could be hidden from you."

"True, exactly so. You have run away. Am I right—yes or no?"

"Well—ye-s."

"You want to get a little money, and then go out west and kill Indians, and bears, and buffaloes, and find a gold mine; am I right again?"

"No, you are not."

"Aint, eh!"

"No."

"Well, then, you tell what you want to do, you are so smart!"

"I want to grow up and be an honest man, and earn my own living."

"Ever been to Sunday-school?"

"Yes."

"I thought so."

His Whiskers smoked in silence.

"I want to get a place in some store as errand boy. Then, if I am honest and speak the truth, I will be promoted to book-keeper, then cashier; and if I learn the business well and always do my duty, I will sometime be one of the partners."

"And marry the old man's only daughter, who will inherit the entire fortune," added the tramp.

The boy was grieved; he felt that he was being trifled with.

"I do not believe you want to get work."

"What wonderful insight the boy has!"

"No, you are only a tramp. To-morrow I will leave you."

The man smiled grimly. This puny youngster that he had rescued from starvation was upbraiding and threatening him. It was funny!

"Don't forsake me—what will become of me—alone in an unfriendly wurrld," moaned His Whiskers, in mock despair. Then changing his manner:

"Why did you run away?"

"My father would not let me go to school."

"That was right; education of the head is not all."

"He would not let me read books."

"But they are mostly lies anyway."

"He beat me."

"You deserved it: spare the rod and spoil the child."

"I had to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and milk seven cows before breakfast."

"Cows must be milked."

"Then I had to husk corn in the field until dark."

"You said you did not believe I wanted work—how about yourself?"

"But I got no pay for it."

"Of course not. You are only a child—what would you do with money?"

"My father gave me a calf, and then sold it when

it was a year old. Then he whipped me because I cried when the butcher drove the calf away."

"You should have been glad to be rid of it. Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"Yes, three sisters; two older and one younger than me; they have to work in the field as I did too."

"Plow and harrow, haul manure, drive reaper, and husk corn?"

"Yes."

"Well, your father is a man after my own heart; women nowadays are usurping men's places in everything—your father is willing they should. Is the old gent religious?"

"My father is a deacon in the church," replied the boy, with a quiet show of pride.

"Your pa is a nice man. Mother alive?"

"Yes, but she is sick most of the time."

"Would you like to see her about now?"

The child's chin quivered. He fought hard to choke back the tears.

"Shut up now, kid; none of the lachrymose, or I will use my parental authority, and make you think of old times. Now come with me, and we will get supper over at that brown house, a friend of mine lives there. Dry up that snuffle, or I will lick you and put you to bed without your supper! It pains me, James, to have to reprove you so, but it is my duty—you are so perverse—if I whip you it will only be for your own good—to correct your evil tendencies—and if you are not thankful for the chastisement I will give it to you again for your ingratitude! Shut up, now!"



CHAPTER IX.

*“Is not this a rare fellow, my lord,
He’s good at anything and yet—a fool.”*

ARRIVING at the brown farm-house they were greeted, as they entered the yard, by a tall angular woman who looked like an Amazon. “What do you want here!!” she demanded before His Whiskers had time to speak.

“Madam, I am a Sociologist travelling *incognito*, studying the ways, habits, customs, and manners of the common people.”

“Well, you can’t study me—go ’long with you.”

“I would not care to. Madam, I wish to see your husband on very particular business.”

“My husband is not at home, but the bull dog is.”

“So I perceive,” said the tramp.

The dog was chained to the kennel which stood at the corner of the house. He was as vicious and savage a looking brute as ever gnawed a bone. He plunged against the chain, making leaps into the air, growling, barking, and showing his gleaming teeth.

“You git, now, or I ’ll turn him loose.”



“PERHAPS SOME OF THE STORES NEED A CLERK?”

See page 51.

“I was just going to suggest it. Turn him loose, madam, and I will teach him to jump through a hoop. I like dogs.”

The boy was white with fear. He was tugging at the tramp's hand and begging him in a whisper to come away.

“I want to get a place with you for my nephew here, you are such kind, good people.”

“I don't want work *here*,” whispered the boy ;
“not *here* ; let me go.”

Instead of the boy holding the man's hand, the man was holding his by the wrist, and dragging the child along behind him as they followed the woman around the house.

“We will sit here on the back stoop if you have no objection. I do not care to go in, thank you !”

“I have not invited you in, and I *do* object to your sitting on my porch. Now go.”

His Whiskers had seated himself on the steps, pulled the boy down beside him, and was now lighting his pipe.

“Madam, see what a fine lad he is. I know you will like him ; look at this head.”

He pulled off the boy's hat.

“Did you cut his hair?” asked the woman.

The question was in order. Such a case of hair cut probably was never seen, before or since. In places, especially on the forehead, the hair was cut to the skin and in others it was several inches long. The whole head a mass of corrugations.

“Poor folks cannot afford a private barber,” gloomily answered His Whiskers.

"You say the boy is your nephew; down at the village he was your son."

"They misunderstood me, madam. I never married."

"For the good of the woman I hope you never will."

"For the good of humanity, madam. I am a philosopher—philosophers should never marry."

"Why not?"

"When farmers marry they sometimes breed philosophers; when philosophers marry they produce nothing but farmers. Madam, does it not strike you as a humiliating fact that great men are not capable of transmitting their genius to their sons? In fact, genius never comes from the male parent. On the contrary, all the meaner traits of character seem to be supplied to their sons by great men, while the characteristics that have made the father famous are entirely wanting.

"The same law seems to prevail in man's moral nature. Truth, honor, courage are less frequently transmitted from the father to the son than the baser passions. Physically, the same thing is seen. Men of splendid physique rarely beget sons of equal perfection. A man will almost invariably transmit a disease or a tendency to it, but not a well developed muscular system.

"Man is a lonely creature. He stands by himself independent even of the parents who beget him. Even they do not know him. There are recesses in the nature of every person into which no eye ever penetrates. There are traits in the character no

glimpse of which is ever obtained. Paternity, Madam, is quite a necessary office we must admit, but it does not compare with maternity.

“It was a bad blunder of the ancients to account for genius by paternity when the real facts are that the great man is under obligations to his mother for his heritage. The Roman Catholic has a scientific basis for his deification of Mary. Assuming the divinity of the son it will never do to dispute the divinity of the woman who bore him.”

“Well, my bread is in the oven. I must look after it. Now git, both of you, or I ’ll let the dog loose!”

“Madam, one moment. You have touched on a great moral question; I must make it plain to you—genius should never marry—to marry is to die at the top; for a great soul the wedding bells peal the knell of joy. Men and women who study and read before marriage never do after. Gallant lovers make surly husbands; charming maidens scolding wives. Bluebeard was a gallant lover; Zantippe a charming maiden. Men engaged, write poems, married men, promises to pay. What! me marry? To have a woman kissed by a frowsy justice of the peace and then turned over to me to do with as I please? To be granted permission by a preacher to embrace the woman I love? Never! To sum up the whole subject, madam, in a single word, allow me to say that marriage creates a definite situation, suppresses choice, subverts the will, murders spontaneity, substitutes law for love, strangles reverie, makes life a scrimmage, paralyzes power, destroys

imagination, ties a rope to your leg, puts a stop to philosophy, saps religion, belittles ambition, kills aspiration, smothers hope, dwarfs sublimity, shortens the pleasures, circumscribes your orbit, dilutes your horizon, halves your joys, doubles your sorrows, triples your woes, multiplies your troubles, gives you nightmare for sleep, death for life, petrifies progress, legalizes lust, taints the soul, ossifies truth, tarnishes beauty, damages intellect, poisons poetry, distorts the senses, puts a fly in the ointment, strabismatizes spirituality, dissipates ideality, dispels illusion, chokes inspiration, confers rights but cancels favors, reduces animation, dulls desire, increases friction, stifles genius, vaporizes passion, adds to misery, minimizes merit, makes courage a coward, lessens piety, gives fixity for freedom, breeds confusion, throttles——”

!!!!!!

The dog was loose!!!!





CHAPTER X.

"Let us sit and mock the good housewife."

EVIDENTLY the brindled bull-dog was glad to be set loose, for as soon as he knew that he had freedom, his rage was turned to joy. He showed no disposition to attack the man and boy who sat so quietly on the steps.

"Sic 'em, Tige!" shouted the woman.

The dog wagged his stumpy tail and ran off a little way and rolled on the grass. The tramp whistled and threw him a stick. The dog picked it up in his mouth and brought it back.

Had it not been for the tramp the dog would certainly not have been released.

Did the dog know it?

Perhaps.

Have dogs gratitude?

More than men.

"Are you going to sit there the rest of the day and all the night?" snarled the woman.

"Yes, madam, that is what we propose doing."

"Well, stay there then."

She slammed the door, and probably locked it.

The tramp took from under his coat a little coil

of telegraph wire that he had picked up somewhere on the railroad track. He straightened it out so it was about twelve feet long as it lay stretched out in the grass at his feet. There was a hook at the farther end, bent down close. The man took a few bread crumbs out of his pocket and threw them towards a fine flock of young chickens that were in the yard. The fowls came up eagerly to get the food. Much to the surprise of the boy he saw one of the young roosters moving up gradually toward where they sat. Strange to relate, the bird was coming tail first. On closer view, he saw the wire hook was around the chicken's leg. Quicker than thought the chicken was in the hands of His Whiskers, its neck broken by a quick twist, and the bird was buttoned under his coat before it had time to squawk.

The wire was then coiled up and stowed away.

The tramp filled his pipe, lit it, and the pair started off down the road, followed by the bull-dog, that frolicked and wagged his abbreviated tail.

They had gotten a quarter of a mile away, when the woman came running after them, calling :

“Don't you steal our dog ; bring back that dog—bring back that dog—bring back that dog !”

“He has no collar on. I was going to put him in the pound ; but call him back, I will let it go this time.”

The boy was much relieved to know it was the dog the woman wanted ; he feared she had missed the rooster.

“Why did you not pay for that chicken ?” asked the lad.



“MADAM, ONE MOMENT ; YOU HAVE TOUCHED ON A GREAT MORAL SUBJECT.”

See page 59.

“Am I a millionaire?”

“No, but the woman might have given you the chicken if you had told her that you had no money.”

“Not that woman; that’s old Mrs. Gopher, Jimmy. She is the meanest woman that ever stood in stockings—the very worst, I do believe, on this terrestrial. She wouldn’t give you a feather out of a chicken’s tail. I once asked her if I could get a drink of water out of the creek that runs through their pasture, and she refused it.”

“What did you do? You must have been very thirsty!”

“I just went off and milked one of her cows.”

“In what?”

“Oh, a pan. I waited until she went in the house, and then I got a pan off that shelf you saw.”

“Is she such an awful wicked woman?”

“Wicked! Worse than that; she is a she devil. Such people have to be punished. The last time I was through here the folks were all away to a camp meeting. These country people are such fools that when they go away they advertise the fact by pulling down all the blinds; and then they always leave the key to the back door under the door-mat or behind the blinds on the nearest window-ledge. Well, I just locked the dog in the pantry, drowned a brood of young chickens in the milk, put the cat in a beehive, dumped ashes on the kitchen floor, filled the well with cord-wood, painted the mirrors with mud, spit in the coffee-pot, mixed the sugar and salt, opened the window-screens so the flies could get in,

put tobacco in the tea, turned the clock back, carried off the old woman's spectacles, took the gates off the hinges, turned the cows in the corn, the pigs in the garden, let the calf loose, and then took just one young rooster. It was so very choice, broiled, that I thought I would go back and get its brother to-day.

"Another time I came here with three fellows. The folks were at dinner. Two of my friends held the doors shut while I upset the bee-hives; then we all made off with mosquito netting over our heads, leaving the family to fight it out with the bees.

"The busy bees of course were mad, and tackled every one they could get at, and the only thing the farmer folk could do was to go inside and shut all the doors to keep from being stung to death."

The man and boy went down across a field back from the road. His Whiskers picked and dressed the chicken as if he had done such work before. A fire was made under a wire fence, and the fowl was nicely broiled.

His Whiskers had three pickles, four crackers, and two slices of bread, which, with tea that he made in the tin cup, made a good supper. Then they went back to the stack, and burrowing deep in the straw went to sleep.



“ WELL THEN, MAY I GET A DRINK OUT OF YOUR CREEK ? ”

See page 63.



CHAPTER XI.

“Stroke your chins and swear by your beards that I am a knave.”

WHEN the boy awoke in the morning the tramp was nowhere in sight. The child thought he had been deserted; he did not care much if he had. He was coming to the conclusion that his friend lacked ambition, and was also untruthful.

Perhaps he was right on both counts.

The air was cold, and the white frost covered the stubble all about. The sun was just coming up, and the boy stood irresolute, debating in his own mind what was best to do.

He decided he would return to the village and go straight to the woman who had given them their breakfast. She was a kind, motherly soul—he would tell her the truth. He would confess that what His Whiskers had said the day before was false; the best way is to tell the truth, deceive no one. He knew the woman would give him his breakfast, and he could get warm by her kitchen fire; his teeth chattered with the cold.

Yes, perhaps she would help him get a place as errand boy or clerk in one of the stores.

He was starting off when the straw began to move as the mountain did when in labor. At length a grimy hand came up, then a trowsled head, and forth crawled the tramp.

"Was that the breakfast bell I heard?"

The boy had heard no bell.

"Well, I must have dreamed it. I'm hungry, anyway. We will go over to my Aunt Jane's."

"But you said we would go back to the village so I could find work."

"Work, boy! work on an empty stomach? Never; it is n't healthy."

They walked across the field and followed the road for half a mile, when they applied for breakfast, His Whiskers telling the usual tale of distress.

"So you are looking for work, are you?" said the man, who answered the rap.

"Yes, sir! and the condition of things in the country is getting pretty serious when an honest man cannot——"

"Well, what kind of work can you do?"

"Me! I can play you on the piano the entire opera of *Tannhäuser* by Wagner, from memory."

"Indeed, but we have no piano."

"Well, I will paint the portrait of your first wife."

"I have had only one wife; she is living, and we want no portrait."

"I can write you a treatise on the binomial theorem."

"Don't."

"Then I will teach your son every paradigm of the Latin verb *amo*."

"No ; English is good enough for us."

"I will show your daughter how to dance the racquet."

"We are Methodists, and never dance."

"I will model your bust in clay."

"I 'd rather not."

"Then I will give you the entire play of *Hamlet*, taking five characters myself, to say nothing of the first and second grave-diggers."

"Get out with your grave-diggers, just dig me five bushels of potatoes and my wife will give both of you breakfast."

The tramp hesitated, and began to explain that his back was weak ; could he not wash the dishes or do something else ? something not requiring so much mental exertion ! The boy broke in with a glad acceptance. The tramp shut him off :

"Hold on there ; have you an accordeon ?"

"Yes, we have an accordeon, but *you* can't have it."

"Bring out the accordeon, I will sing you a song, and we will dig three bushels of potatoes instead of five, provided the coffee is not muddy nor the meat cold."

The farmer smiled, and told one of the several children that were crowding about the door to get the accordeon. It was brought, and seating himself on the step, His Whiskers sang, first announcing : "Ladies and Gentlemen, I loaf and invite my soul ; I sing you a song of myself. The title of the touching little thing I will sing is :

HIS WHISKERS TO HIMSELF.

I.

I 'm a most æsthetic tramp,
Fol de rol,
Though I 'm said to be a scamp,
Fol de rol ;
Oft I watch the grazing herds,
And the happy mating birds
'Neath the clouds as white as curds,
Fol de rol.

2.

I observe the starry skies,
Fol de rol,
And I never yet told lies,
Fol de rol ;
I adore the violet,
And the modest mignonette,
With the early dew-drop wet,
Fol de rol.

3.

When I think of winters spent,
Fol de rol,
And the fasting days of Lent,
Fol de rol ;
When the cold March winds did blow,
And the hash it was no go,
And the beer had ceased to flow,
Fol de rol,



“LUCK IS AGAINST ME: I ’M IN LOVE AGAIN.”

See page 71.

4.

Then I dote upon this spot,
Fol de rol,
And your little vine-clad cot,
Fol de rol ;
Where I chase the butterflies,
'Neath the cloudless summer skies,
Dream of tarts and pumpkin pies,
Fol de rol.

5.

I am wandering but to look,
Fol de rol,
For impressions for a book,
Fol de rol ;
When I am in New York back,
At this place I 'll take a whack,
Ridicule it, paint it black,
Fol de rol.

“ Did you compose that song yourself ? ” timidly,
but admiringly, asked a buxom young woman who
stood in the doorway.

“ Yes, Miss ; most people take it for one of Long-
fellow's productions, but it is my own ; I have the
true divine inflatus.”

“ The what ? ”

“ The poetic eczema.”

“ Oh ! ”

The boy started for the potato field and the tramp
followed. The potatoes were soon dug, and the pair
were rewarded with a good breakfast.

While the young woman was waiting on the table, His Whiskers was glibly talking about the science of agriculture.

“Uneducated people call potatoes ‘spuds,’ little knowing that this is the Greek word for potato. You doubt it, Miss, but if you will bring me your Xenophon I will show it to you in the original. Has it never struck you as queer, Miss, that we never raise potatoes from the seed? We raise them from eyes, that is, by transplanting a piece of the root, for if we plant the seed that is found in the potato ball we get something entirely different. That is the way we get the sweet potato, and once I planted potato seed and raised squash. Talk about ‘like producing like,’ it is all a hollow theory. It is not true in the human family—black-eyed women have red-haired babies—now I will leave it to you!”

The woman scorned the question, and asked: “Why don’t you button up your shirt collar?”

This was a very proper question, for although the weather was cold, the man’s shirt front was open nearly to the waist, as usual.

“Miss, I see you are of an inquiring turn of mind. I will explain. It is only a matter of fashion or custom as to what part of the body we cover, or in fact whether we wear clothes at all. You remember what Thomas Carlyle says in *Sartor Resartus* about a naked House of Lords! All a matter of habit—just habit. Now about covering certain parts of the body and leaving other parts exposed, why, in the islands of Timbuctoo, where I once went for my health, there is a custom—but we will let that pass,

You yourself do not cover your face ; well, you do not suffer from the exposure. Now, my dear young lady, I am all face. But this is a sad world."

"Why do you say so?"

"Luck is against me ; I 'm in love again."

"Since when?"

"Since I saw you."

After a hearty breakfast they started for the next town five miles away, where His Whiskers explained to the boy he knew a man who would give them work.

"By the way, kid, what 's your name?"

"Jimmy Whiskers!" came the quick reply, without a smile.

"You have me—here is a quarter."

The tramp felt in his many pockets, but the quarter could not be found.

"I know, but your other name!"

"What is yours?"

"Mine? Smith—my name is Smith."

"But your other name of Whiskers! I think they might have given you a prettier name than that."

"It would have been very difficult."

"Why do they put on the 'His'?"

"Oh, that is a title—a mark of honor. You call the President, His Excellency ; the Pope, His Holiness ; a bishop, His Eminence ; a duke, His Grace ; a judge, His Honor ; a king, His Majesty ; a peer, His Lordship ; and I am His Whiskers."

"But you have n't nice whiskers!"

"Have n't I though—but you should have seen me when I was working the preacher racket—I had

a whisker like a billygoat ; it came to my waist and was the color of a sunset at sea,—the chiaro-oscuro was very elegant."

"It must have been nice, why did you shave it off?"

"Oh, wherever I went people would ask me if I was expecting 'a call.' I could not step into a church without being asked up into the pulpit. At prayer meetings I would be called on to 'lead' or 'occupy the time,' and women used to pass me out cold victuals just to hear me say grace. Then I had the finest clerical cough you ever heard."

"What's that?"

"Clerical cough—why, don't you know what that is? No preacher can hope to succeed without he has either a fine long chin whisker or a big, round, smooth face with a double chin; and then if he has the clerical cough in addition he can get a 'charge' anywhere he chooses. Or if he prefers to 'supply' he must have a couple of sermons, a duster, and the cough, then he is fixed."

"But what is the cough for?"

"Why, when you get up in meeting and say: 'Beloved brethren, I have been thinking while sitting here'—then you cough and it gives you time to think—beside that, it is very impressive. A large man who begins his address with: 'My friends (bow-wow-wow)' always creates a favorable impression."

"What denomination was you?"

"Why, all of 'em of course—just according to whom I was visiting with. Presbyterian—for revision and against. High Church Episcopal, Low Church, Broad Gauge Baptist—close communion or Baptist



“ BUT YOU HAVE N'T NICE WHISKERS.”

See page 71.

with liberal tendencies, Seventh Day Adventist, Ranting Methodist, Congregational—both wings, Hook and eye Baptists, Dunkards, Quakers—Hick-site or Orthodox, Campbellites. I have been sprinkled, poured, immersed, and ducked—backward and on my knees—being put under once or three times just according to the ‘convictions’ of my friends.”

“If you had such a good time why did you quit it?”

“Well, I’ll tell you—one thing, I did not like performing marriage ceremonies—it made me feel guilty to think of all those people I left behind fighting just because I had joined them and they could n’t get apart. Then at christenings the babies would yell so it began to affect my nerves, but that last funeral fixed me.”

“What funeral?”

“Why, you see the regular preacher was off on his summer vacation, and when I came along and dropped in at the undertaker’s for a bite of mince pie, he said: ‘So you are a preacher, eh? Well, you are just my man. I want you to preach a funeral obsequy for me at ten o’clock.’ The undertaker loaned me a pair of white cotton gloves, and I combed out my whiskers, braced up my cough, and waded in. I met the coffin at the church door, and walked up the aisle stroking my whiskers. My atmosphere was so solemn that it made even the sexton shed tears. He told me afterward that he had jerked the bell rope in that same church for thirty years, and never had he seen a manner so grievous and grievous as mine. But the sermon, Jimmy, the

sermon! it was a dandy. I raked history from stem to stern; I launched in on poetry and ancient folklore. I quoted from the Vedas, the Icelandic Sagas, and the Rumtatum of the Hindus. Then I brought in Jeremiah, Jonah, and Malachi. When I got through with these I tackled Max Müller on his philology, squared off at Darwin, and ripped Herbert Spencer up the back on evolution. I scouted Beecher's 'six periods,' and insisted on the six days of twenty-four hours each; for if the Almighty has the power we say he has, he could do the job in six days as easily as in 'six periods.'

"Then I waltzed in on Plato, Plutarch, and Epicurus; denounced Marcus Aurelius for persecuting the Methodists, and got around to the deceased on the home stretch. I compared him with Alexander the Great, Francis of Assisi, St. Paul, Columbus, Napoleon, and John Brown. I told how he had enjoyed, been misunderstood, suffered, and of how he was now in Father Abraham's bosom, wearing the crown of life reserved only for those who prove faithful. Oh, it was a great sermon, boy—you missed it in not being there. When I got through I went down for the sexton to congratulate me, and what do you think he said! He just gazed at me with lack-lustre eye and remarked, 'Deceased was not a he, deceased was a her.'"

"'Can you tell me the way to the nearest barber's?' I asked.

"I had my whiskers shaved off and have never preached since—it is very tiresome on one's feet to stand in a pulpit!"



A GREASY PACK OF CARDS WAS PRODUCED.

See page 75.

They walked along in silence for some time when the tramp said, "Now, Jimmy, you need not tell me your name—it is no difference. What's a name, anyway? only a sound—a mere contraction of the throat—an expulsion of air—a twist of the tongue and it's a name. Any one makes the same sound in your direction you say 'what!' But if any one asks your name just tell them it is Smith—Jimmy Smith, and that my name is Smith too."

After walking a couple of miles they came across two very seedy-looking men seated by the roadside.

"Hello, Whiskers," said one. They got up and greeted him joyfully, evidently very glad to see him. They entirely ignored the presence of the child.

A greasy pack of cards was produced and the three men sat down on the ground and began playing, just as if they had only left off the game five minutes before.

The boy was nervous, and His Whiskers noticing it, said: "I'll be through in a minute, then we will go."

They must have played for nearly an hour when one of the new men shouted, "It's on you, Whiskers—it's on you—no backing out now!"

"All right, I'll get you the next time, Nibsy."

The tramp searched his pockets and with more success than before, for this time he found a half dollar and also an empty bottle.

"Here, Jimmy, hustle over to the village and get us some whiskey—one of these gentlemen has been snake-bitten, and I am not well myself."

The boy refused.

His Whiskers coaxed, then he threatened, but the child stood firm. Then one of the other tramps began to threaten, and made a move as if to strike the boy.

"Hold on there, Oshkosh, if you want to hit any one hit me. Come on now, just hit me!"

The man stood still.

"If you don't see what you want, ask for it," said His Whiskers, as his grey eyes glared at the fellow.

"Well, you are terrible touchy over the kid, aint you.—Here, give me that bottle and the mun; I'll go myself."

The man started off toward the village, bottle in hand.

"Come, please do come, I'm afraid," whispered the child, as he tugged at His Whiskers' sleeve.

"Go on yourself—I'm tired of you, you are a nuisance."

The lad started off alone. He had walked nearly to the next village, when coming to a rising piece of ground a voice was heard calling loudly: "Jimmy, oh, Jimmy!"

He looked back and there was His Whiskers on a slow run—his hat in his hand. The sweat was streaming from his red face on which the purple veins stood out as if ready to burst. It was probably the first time the man had moved out of a walk for a full year. He was gasping for breath so he could scarcely speak, but he managed to exclaim in a disjointed way:

"Hold on now—what's the matter with you any-

way—could n't you wait a minute? Here I 've had to come off without even a taste of that 'red eye'—and after paying for it too—and furnishing the bottle beside. You 're a pretty kid, you are, to run away from a fellow this way !”





CHAPTER XII.

“ . . . swore by his honor that they were good pancakes, and swore by his honor the mustard was naught.”

WHEN they reached the village the boy proposed that they go at once to see the man who His Whiskers was so sure would give them work.

“That is just what I was going to say,” assented the man. “He lives in the brick house there by the church.”

They walked straight up to the front door and rang the bell. A girl appeared.

“Please tell Mr. Marshall that his old friend Smith wishes to see him,” brazenly remarked the tramp.

“Mr. Marshall?”

“Yes, tell him I want him at once—be quick.”

“Mr. Marshall does not live here; I don’t know any one in town by the name of Marshall.”

“Why, he lived here last year!”

“No, he did not—we have lived here for ten years.”

As the pair walked down the gravel walk the tramp explained: “She lies; that’s what she does. Mr. Marshall does live there—he saw us out of the



THEY GREETED HIM JOYFULLY.

See page 75.

window—I got a glimpse of his mug as we went in at the gate. It's the cold shake, that's what. All these rich people are down on us—we are only poor folks!"

The boy was disappointed, but it gradually dawned on him that "Mr. Marshall" was a myth.

They washed at a horse trough marked W. C. T. U., which was in the centre of the street, then trudged on.

"We only had two meals yesterday; I am feeling the effects of it—let us try to strike a 'square' in here," said His Whiskers.

A woman was digging up tulip bulbs in the front yard, and as they approached she called out:

"You can't get anything to eat here."

"Don't want anything to eat."

"Well, we have no ashes to sift."

"I would not sift them if you had."

"Our wood is all split."

"I am thankful for the information, but, sister, I only wanted to ask a trifling favor!"

"Well, what is it?"

"My dear madam, there is a storm coming up, a thunder shower. Now four of my brothers were killed by lightning—it runs in our family. Could I go upstairs, lie down on your feather bed, and wait till the clouds roll by? Feathers are a non-conductor——"

"What do they want?" called a man who was working in the garden and who had not been seen up to this time. Before the woman could speak His Whiskers replied in a loud voice:

"Only a slice of bread and butter for my poor invalid son, good sir!"

"Oh, Mary, give 'em a bite—poor devils—one cannot afford to turn them away for fear there may be a worthy man among them who is really hungry!"

"But you stated that you did not want anything to eat," said the woman addressing His Whiskers.

"I do not for myself, but my son here has eaten nothing since day before yesterday. Neither have I for that matter, but I never could beg for my own wants—I would die first."

The woman looked at the marble whiteness of the child's face. She saw the dark lines beneath the eyes. The boy's appearance certainly bore out the man's assertion that he was sick. Her sympathies were moved.

She led the way to the back porch, where the boy and tramp sat down. A generous supply of cold pancakes and butter, also two pieces of ham were brought out for them. As they ate, the woman stood in the door and watched them.

"You like it, it seems," she said pleasantly.

"Yes, madam, the pancakes are all right, but the butter is a trifle 'off.'"

"You tramps are a most ungrateful lot! I do not see why Heaven made you."

"Neither do I, madam, neither do I; the ways of Providence are inscrutable. Yet there are people who, if they had been present during that week when God was making things, would just have stood around in the way and given advice. But you are a sensible woman—that last remark you made proves it.

You have what we call the inquiring or philosophic mind. That remark of yours suggests the great theme of the Elimination of the Unnecessary, which is now shaking Europe to its very centre.

“The wise men who explain everything tell us that nothing was made in vain. You and I, madam, will not be so presumptuous as to set up our opinions against the wise men aforesaid, but I wish to explain that a thing which once perhaps was very useful is now often retained, although the necessity of its being here has long since vanished. For instance, there is that little thing with the long name: the *appendenda vermiformis*. No stork brings a baby but what he brings, too, an *appendenda*. The baby grows up and the *appendenda* kills the man—that is to say, kills one out of every ninety-five, if we believe the wise men, and of course we must. And now follows a most dire state of affairs; the *appendenda* is getting more and more savage—wusser and wusser. Formerly we had to obstruct him with a strawberry seed or a bristle from a tooth-brush, in order to arouse his wrath. Such as did not like strawberries could use the tooth-brush bristle, provided they were so silly as to use a tooth-brush. But now if a man merely *thinks* appendicitis and thinks it hard, lo! a severe pain strikes him in the right side, his pulse leaps to 96, a cold sweat envelops him, he takes to his bed, and—the doctor charges him just two hundred dollars for performing the operation.

“But, you say, if imagination can cause appendicitis, why cannot imagination cure it? To which,

madam, I answer: While your question might be proper at certain times, it is entirely out of place here, for we are not discussing metaphysics, but I have mentioned this subject simply by way of illustrating another point which we will get to if you are patient: the subject I am discussing being none less than the sublime one of the Elimination of the Unnecessary.

“We now reach the vital point; why does Nature still retain the appendenda? My answer is that Nature does not know it is loaded; the dame is ignorant, wasteful, reckless, and faulty in many ways, as we who know her know full-well. But with all her faults we love her still (as the man said of his talkative wife).

“Then there are rudimentary muscles in the face that were once used for flapping the ears. Men and women who have read books on etiquette no longer flap their ears, but the muscles are still there.

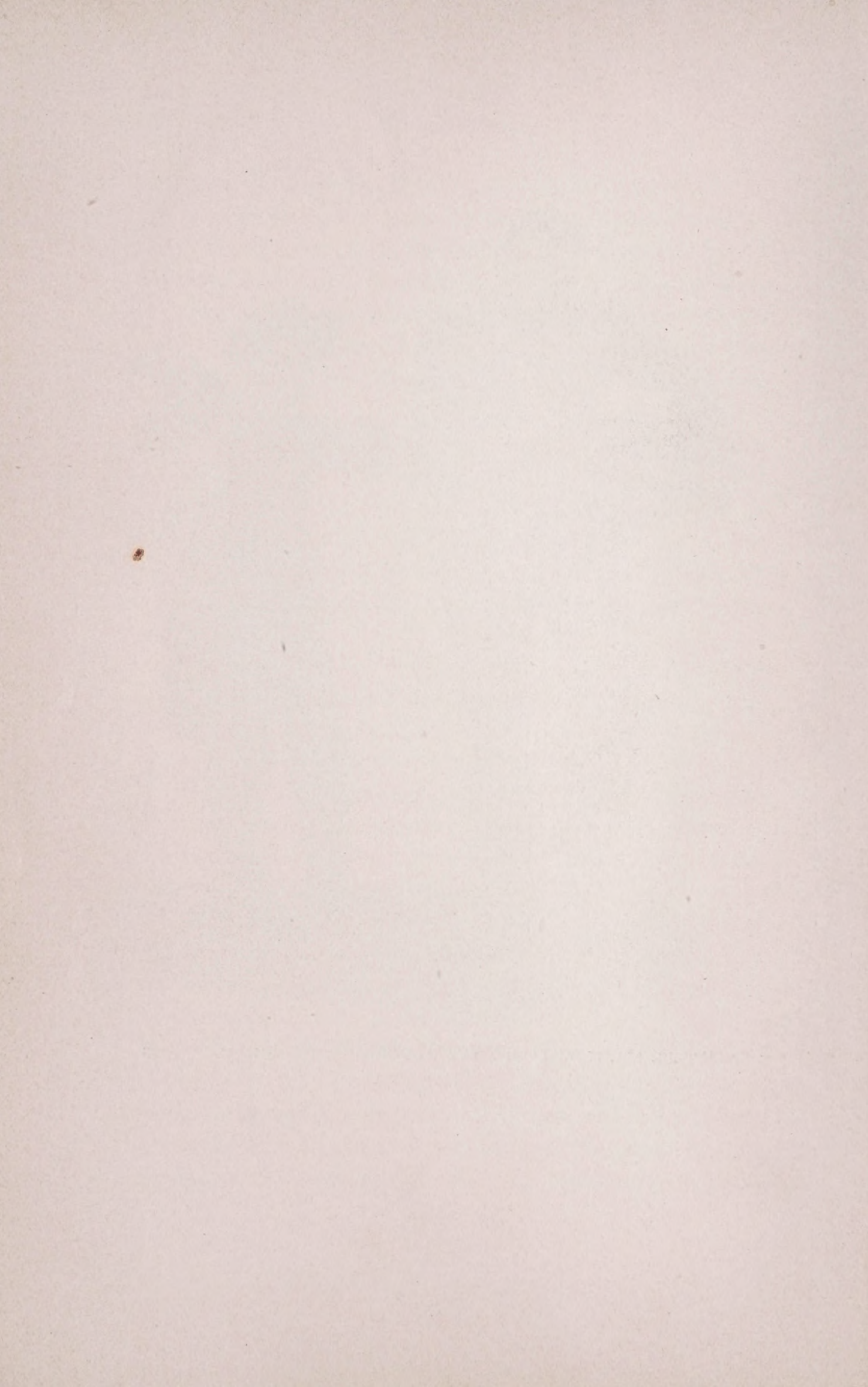
“Madam, I once had the felicity of helping dissect the body of a South Sea Islander, and we found several muscles that the professor could give us no light on. I mention this fact as it was the only time I ever knew of a college professor acknowledging ignorance; this is what fixed the fact so firmly in my memory. No doubt there will come a time when the entire body will be a superfluity.

“Possibly in religion there are forms, ceremonies, and figures of speech—theological appendendæ, so to speak—things we do not want, yet dare not throw away, which were once significant, but now are retained only because we do not remember a time



“ TELL MR. MARSHALL THAT HIS OLD FRIEND SMITH WISHES
TO SEE HIM.”

See page 78.



when they were not; but of this I will speak later.

“The letter ‘l’ at one time was always sounded as in calm, could, would, etc.; so with the ‘e.’ But we have ceased sounding the final ‘e’ except in certain instances where we wish to make bad poetry. I wish to say a word in excuse for the letter ‘e,’ though: A smart fellow, in days ago, has shown us how we can utilize it in certain instances to show the sound of a letter preceding. Thus in ‘car’ and ‘care,’ ‘bar’ and ‘bare’; but generally the final ‘e’ is merely a harmless philological appendenda. Harmless, yet costly, as statistics show that it costs the dear people \$76,981.50 per year for ink to write this letter in commercial correspondence and bookkeeping alone. This vast sum is utterly wasted, and note the liberality of the computation, for I make no mention of the writers of serial stories. Accepted and rejected MS. would beyond a doubt swell the grand total to at least \$200,000.00 per annum. This sum if expended in loaves of bread, baked after the French fashion, would make a band extending from New York to San Francisco.

“The letter ‘q’ is a superfluous alphabetical appendenda—a nondescript of the worst sort, and of no more real value for helping to express our thoughts in writing than one of the Chinese word-signs would be. It never ends an English word, and cannot begin one without the aid of the letter ‘u,’ being invariably followed by the last mentioned letter in all words belonging to our language. The man does n’t live that can tell the why of the pecul-

iar relation of the letters 'q' and 'u,' or why the former was given its curious name. Some argue that its name was applied because of the tail or cue at the bottom of the letter, but the original 'q,' when sounded just as it is to-day, was made without the cue, the character much resembling the English sign for pounds. 'K' and 'w' give us the sound of 'q,' as in the word 'quilt.'

"No language should be burdened with the letter 'h,' The Greeks showed the sound of the aspirate by a simple mark. Even now, Englishmen use or omit the sound of this letter at will. They call it 'Haich,' and they speak of a 'orse' or a 'hass,' as the notion strikes them, or as their grandfathers taught. The letter 'aich' must go.

"Our alphabet would be just as well off or better with twenty-four letters instead of twenty-six. And what a saving to child-life to have to learn but twenty-four letters instead of twenty-six! Nine per cent. of all teachers in the kindergarten departments of our public schools could be discharged, and the money used for increasing the salaries of principals.

"However, madam, we are all obliged to accept life with an appendenda. The muscles for flapping our ears are also insisted on, but their use is now elective under Republican forms of government. The law of the land compels us to commit to memory an alphabet of twenty-six letters,—or at least we are forced to try it ten months in the year from our sixth to our fourteenth year. After that, Allah be praised! we can be as ignorant as we choose; we can learn or

not, and we even have the privilege of forgetting the alphabet without losing our votes.

“ I now reach at last, madam, the *summum bonum* of this panegyric : Why not form a Pan-American society for the Abolition of the Superfluous ? It must be done. I will be its first president, madam, if you will nominate me ! ”

The tramp turned to look at the woman ; she was not there. She had probably gone into the house fully fifteen minutes before.

“ I was deceived in her,” mused His Whiskers, as he deposited the pancakes that were left over inside of his shirt. “ I was deceived in her ; my words of wisdom were wasted. I thought she was a member of the Chautauqua Circle.”





CHAPTER XIII.

"I have trod a measure ; I have flattered a lady ; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with my enemy ; I have undone three tailors."

"JIMMY, this is the deadest town on the I. B. & W.—Let's get out of it to-morrow sure. We will sleep in the barn yonder, but we better not go to bed until after the folks do. I will be polite ; 'after you' is my motto. Let's go down to the depot."

"Won't the man care if we sleep in his barn?" asked the child.

"Oh, no, he wants us to—in fact, he asked me to do him the favor."

"Why does he want us to sleep in his barn?"

"To keep the tramps out, my son, of course."

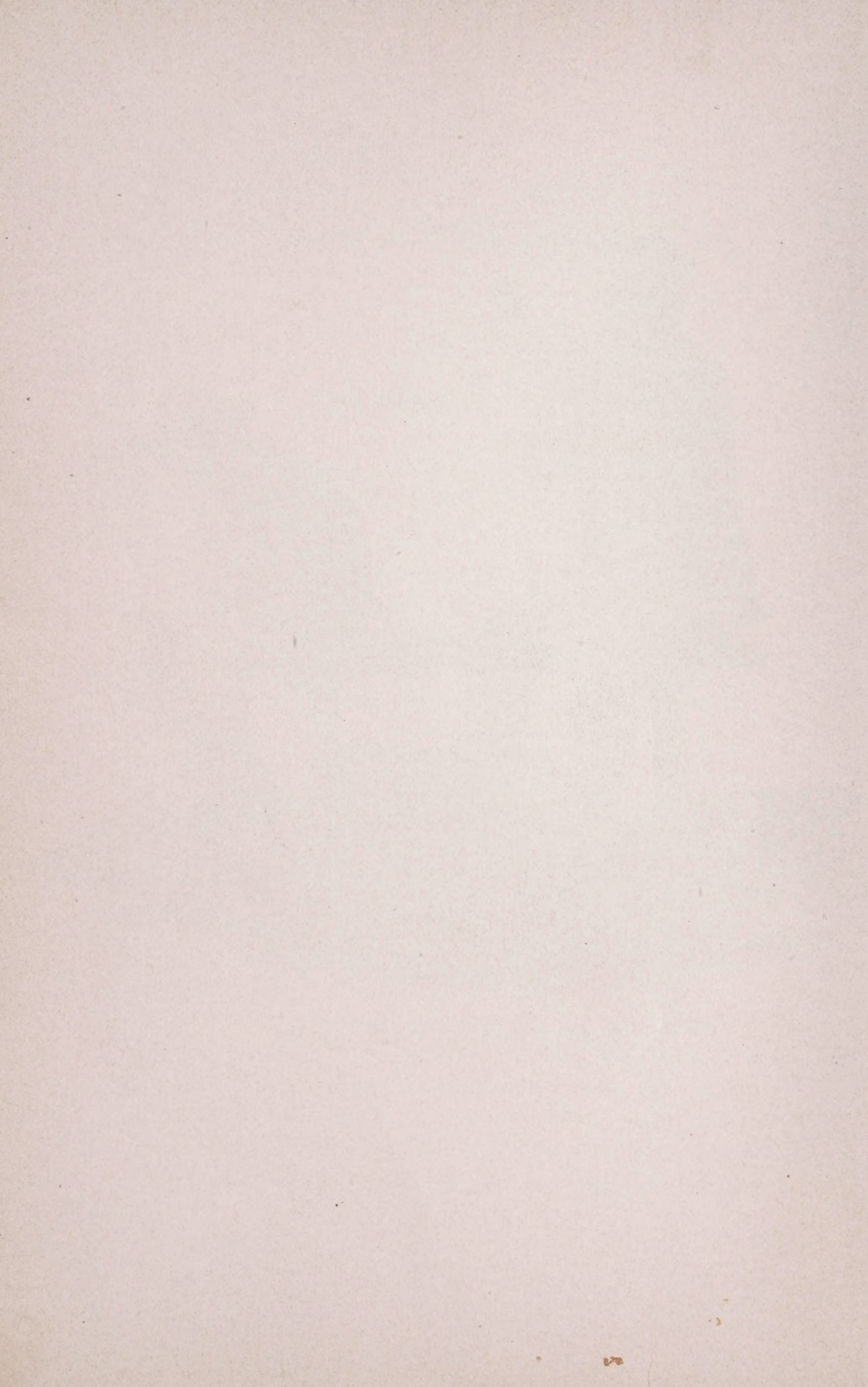
At ten o'clock they went back to the house, and found the lights all out—the folks abed.

The barn was locked, but leaving the boy outside, the tramp climbed through a hole that was used for throwing out compost. He then felt his way through to where the carriages were kept, and opened one of the large doors, which was closed only with a bar. It was moonlight, and the trembling child



“THE BUTTER IS A TRIFLE OFF, MADAM.”

See page 80.



could make out four horses that stood blanketed in their stalls.

"It's too early in the season to blanket a good horse," said His Whiskers, "it will make 'em tender."

He removed the four blankets, shut the barn door, and making the boy climb into the hay mow, he rolled him up in two of the blankets. Then he covered himself with the others, and they were both soon asleep.

Before daylight His Whiskers was up, and placing all four blankets on one horse, "for luck," they started away.

"I always get up early when I sleep there," said His Whiskers; "the man that owns that barn is a great chinner—the greatest I ever heard! He can talk the horns off from a muley bull. If he saw us he would invite us in to breakfast, and then we would have to stay and hear him buzz for two hours. If there is anything I hate it is a man who gets to talking and does not know enough to stop—anything but that."

They found breakfast with very little trouble, and then the boy refused to go on to the next place, as His Whiskers wished to do.

"I positively will not—I am going to find work, and I am going to find it at once."

Such a show of resolution in this frail little mortal, on which the man's coat seemed to drag heavily, was comical. The tramp looked at the wan face and the bony little hands, and he sat down on a grassy bank where he could rest his feet in the ditch. Then he

laughed a loud peal of merriment. It was so funny—the child was weak—his big round eyes showed physical pain. Besides, the man had noticed a tremor as if shooting pains were being felt in the frail body, and yet the youngster was laying it down as to “positively” what he would *not* do, and what he positively *would* do.

The tramp laughed, and then he ceased, rather abruptly, as if half ashamed of his rudeness to one so helpless. That is, if we can imagine this man as capable of shame. Possibly the fellow had more heart than we have given him credit for.

“Come, sit down here now. I will go over in this field and get a turnip; then we will have a nice little visit, and I will tell you something good.”

The tramp got the turnip, and, peeling it, offered half to the boy, who refused it. The man sat down as before, but the boy still stood.

“Come, sit down, and I will tell you a fairy story.”

“I will not sit down, and you have already told me too many fairy stories.”

“Now say, what’s the use of getting mad—I was only going to tell you a scheme for making more money in one day than you could make clerking in a store in a week.”

“You want me to steal.”

“No, ’swhelp me.”

“Is your plan an honest one?”

“Certainly, or I would never think of working it.”

“Well, what is it.”

The boy now sat down on the other side of the ditch, facing the man.

“It’s the directory racket, and the smoothest thing on earth for an unfortunate man. I made five dollars one day in Indianapolis last week——”

“Where’s the money?”

“Keep still, will you?—I lost it.”

“Playing cards?”

“Well—yes; I met a fellow who bluffed me into a game. My last half dollar went for that whiskey—which I did n’t get a smell of, yesterday.”

“You are better off.”

“Oh, you are a temperance crank, are you? So is your pa, I’ll bet!”

“My father is a temperance man.”

“And pounded you.”

“My father might be wrong in one thing, and right in another. Go on, please, and tell me of the plan.”

“Well, you just get into a big town, and you borrow an old directory. Then you start in to get names. You go to a house and say: ‘I’m canvassing for the new directory—what’s your name?—married or single?’—and all the other questions you wish, and all the time you are writing them down in a book. Then you say: ‘Good-day—Oh, I almost forgot, do you want your name in small type or caps? The large type are like this [turning leaves of book and showing]; they cost 25 cents extra—no charge, of course, otherwise.’ Lawyers, quack doctors, insurance agents, and the like, want to advertise, so they often hand out the quarter—nearly half you call on if you pick your men, and you look as if you did n’t care whether it rained or snowed.”

"But you said the plan was honest."

"Aint it?"

"Do you publish the book?"

"Well, not exactly; but a man can't starve!"

The boy got up and started to go.

"Hold on there, kid. I have n't told you the plan at all. I was only fooling you—of course I would not want my only son to practise dishonesty by working the 'directory racket.' Now sit down, and I will tell you all about it."

The boy sat down, and His Whiskers explained the scheme. It was a wonderful thing. The plan benefited the man who invested in it—excellent! Nothing like it ever before heard of! The boy was delighted.

"When shall we try it?"

"At the next town—ten miles away."

The boy was more light-hearted than he had been for many days. The tramp, too, seemed to be in good spirits. That day, as they walked, he called the child rascal, scoundrel, thief, tyke, rogue, liar, scamp, cur, cub, and curmudgeon; he shook his club at him, he pulled his ears, he made motions as if to kick him.

He was learning to love him.





THE NEXT TOWN—TEN MILES AWAY.

See page 90.



CHAPTER XIV.

" Well said ; that was laid on with a trowel."

WE are now in Champaign County, Illinois. This is the garden spot of America. What it lacks in scenery is made up in fertility of soil. Poor roads and good soil go hand in hand. Rich rolling prairie everywhere, with woods skirting the little muddy streams, like the fringe on a petticoat.

Stones are curiosities in a goodly portion of the "Sucker State." Smart village people, and farmers with grown-up daughters who have ideas of beauty (and budding womanhood always has an eye for the beautiful), pick up bowlders and carry them home,—long distances sometimes. These stones are often seen in parlors as ornaments, or piled in little pyramids in front yards where the phlox, the live-for-ever, and the peonies grow. If the occupant of the house has the true artistic instinct, that is to say, the art impulse, the little pyramid is whitewashed, otherwise nature is left unadorned.

The true bowlder as an æsthetic specimen is now being replaced in the Corn Belt by the "pot-hole

stone," which is secured at the mouths of coal mines for the asking.

Indeed, so willing are the coal-mine people to distribute these geological curiosities, that I am told no car of bituminous is sent out without a half dozen or more of big pot-hole stones being placed among the lumps of coal, as a glad surprise to the lucky purchaser.

Driving along the highway in this prairie country, you see these pot-hole stones, all nicely whitewashed, placed where the driveway leads to the farmhouse. On dark nights these whitened landmarks light the way for the belated traveller.

We left our man and boy trudging along the highway. It was near evening when they approached the town. They were not so fortunate as usual about supper, but the apples were not all picked in the orchards, and there were plenty of raw turnips. Then His Whiskers had stopped at a pasture that was out of sight of the house, and milked a cow. The tin cup came in handy ; warm milk is very nourishing.

They "put up" at a haystack that night, and the next morning His Whiskers thought it best not to apply at any of the houses for breakfast. So they went a little distance down the railroad track where they made a fire and cooked potatoes in the ashes. These potatoes the tramp dug with his hands in an adjoining field. His Whiskers had two pieces of bread, and these, with the potatoes and apples, made a fair meal.

“Now, Jimmy, you have eighty-five cents, you said?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well give it to me to buy our material—you supply the capital, I the brains.”

The boy handed out the money which he had carefully knotted up in the corner of a handkerchief.

“Now you stay here until I go down to the drug store—I will be back in half an hour.”

The gentle reader is here quite sure that the tramp will not return, but this is a hasty conclusion.

The man returned as promised, carrying two bottles and also an old tin can.

“Now, Jimmy, when I mix this stuff in that can it will spit like ten thousand cats. Look out!!”

It did “spit,” sure enough, but chemicals that hate one another do not fight forever, any more than two mortals. The length of time hate lasts, shortens according to the fury of the fray.

His Whiskers next gathered fragments of an old rotting log that was near, also some decayed bones, and pulverizing the pieces between two flat stones, the powder was added to the mixture in the can. Then he poured in oil from one of the bottles and stirred it in well with a stick.

The boy watched the performance with almost breathless interest.

“Now, James, my son, we will go forth and seize the world by the tail and snap off its demnition head.”

They went across to a fine house that stood

in the outskirts of the town. A grey-bearded old gentleman was tying long rye straw around some rose bushes. Evidently this was the man of the house.

The tramp approached him, smilingly extending his hand.

“You do not know me I guess?”

The old gentleman shook hands and acknowledged he did not have the honor.

“Ah, I am Professor Boccaccio of the University of Athens—my son and I are travelling through the country in search of botanical, geographical, topological, geological, technological, biological, archæological, palæontological, and hydrostatic information. I am an expert, if you will pardon the seeming egotism, in Chromatics, Osmosis, and Chymosium—that is to say, the laws of color, smell, and taste. I rattle around in the chair of Ethnology in my Alma Mater, but Chromatics is my specialty. In this innocent little can, I have one of the most wonderful inventions that has ever been made by living man. I would not sell the secret for compounding this most wonderful mixture for a million—no, not for two million piasters of the coin of my native land. But I see you are a man of appreciation—I will reveal the beauty of the thing to you without charge—have you any tobacco?”

The old gentleman listened to this harangue with patience—he took it with a large grain of salt, not in the slightest deceived by it, but evidently amused.

He did not use tobacco, but he called up to a hired man who was working in the barn, who supplied the required article.

"I thought the tobacco had something to do with your invention?" queried the old gentleman, smiling.

"It has, but only indirectly," said Professor Boccaccio as he handed back the plug, after cutting off a very large chew. "Only indirectly—now for an old paint brush."

The hired man brought a paint brush from the carriage house.

The Professor then picked a small pot-hole stone from a pyramid that stood near the front door. Placing the stone on a shingle, he proceeded to paint it with the mixture in the can.

"Now, my friend, take this stone into the cellar where it is dark—set it down, then stand off and look at it ten feet away."

The old gentleman did as requested and soon returned to call the women of the house.

"Most strangely wonderful," said one of the women; "it throws out a pale light that illuminates the whole cellar."

"And remember," said the Professor, "it is only freshly done. It takes fully three days for my electric paint to dry, and then the surface covered with it shines so as to dazzle one. Next week that stone will make a large room as light as day."

Under no circumstances would Professor Boccaccio sell the paint. For no price would he impart the secret for making it, but he would cover two pot-hole stones that were down by the gateway, for five dollars.

"They will light your whole front lawn," added the Professor.

"But how long will this illumination last?" asked the old gentlemen.

"Forever, man—a gate-post in front of my ancestral castle, painted by my grandfather before I was born, is now so bright at night that it nearly blinds the passers-by. They have to cover it with a blanket, it is so dazzling. This compound simply absorbs the sunshine and gives it out again."

"I'll give you four dollars if you will paint those two stones and not decorate any others in this town or vicinity."

"Never, never!" exclaimed the Professor, who then made a show of consulting his son.

"I am a man of ideas—my son is the financier. He says to make it seven dollars, and we will do the work and give you a written guaranty that it will last ninety-nine years. I do not care to warrant it longer."

"And you will not sell to any one within ten miles of my place, in any direction?"

"Well, yes."

The stones were painted, the money paid, the receipt given, and guaranty duly drawn up and signed.

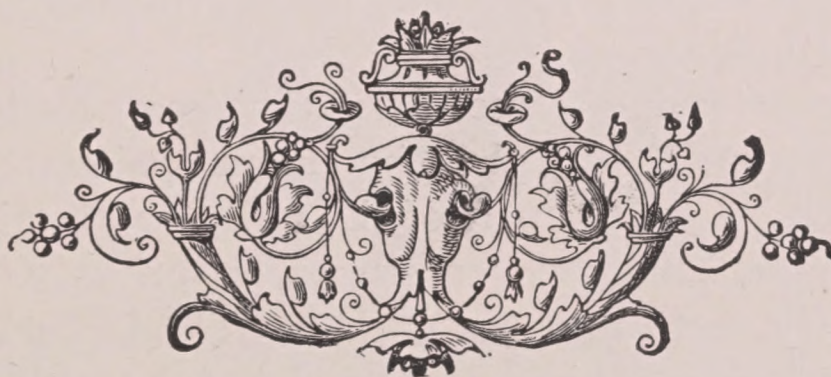
His Whiskers then went across to the other side of town and made the same agreement with two other parties, receiving five dollars from one, and three-fifty from another. This used up all the material, but it made just fifteen dollars and fifty cents, which the tramp tied up in a rag and pinned inside of the boy's blouse.

"Jimmy, my son, in this business there is only one

thing you must look out for, that is a cross-eyed woman. When you meet her you must swipe the soap at the next house or you will have bad luck for a week."

At nine o'clock that night they boarded a freight train for the next town.

7





CHAPTER XV.

"I'll put myself in poor and mean attire and with a kind of umber smirch my face."

OUR man and boy left the train at Le Roy, at three o'clock in the morning. They found a comfortable place to stay until daylight, in the boiler-room of an elevator that stands near the depot, the solitary watchman being evidently glad of their company.

When morning came His Whiskers made up another can of the phosphorescent paint. They "worked" a goodly part of the village with fair success, embellishing eleven stones at prices varying from fifty cents to three dollars. The boy wielded the brush, His Whiskers doing what he called the "fine work"—talking. But, in compliance with the boy's appeals, His Whiskers did not promise "exclusive," excepting in one instance where the temptation was too great and he fell. He tried by sophistical reasoning to make the boy believe that his falsehoods were matters of necessity for the good of all parties, but the child did not see it so.

Result for the day was eight dollars and sixty cents, which was duly turned over to the lad for safe



"IT WILL LAST FOR NINETY-NINE YEARS ; I DO NOT CARE TO
WARRANT IT LONGER."

See page 96.

keeping. During the day they had secured food at the houses where they had called, His Whiskers positively refusing to patronize any restaurant, "out of principle."

The child thought it strange that a man should be so firm in principle on one point, yet very lax in all others. We who are older are not astonished at such caprices and somersaults of conscience.

"We must never sleep in a house, Jimmy, the air is rank poison; and then if you pay people for things it is only encouraging them to be mercenary."

"Well, aint it all right to make money?"

"What does Shakespeare say?"

The boy did not know what Shakespeare said.

"Shake says: 'Therefore, thou gaudy gold, hard food for Midas, I will none of thee, thou base and common drudge 'twixt man and man.' And then what does the Bible say about rich men?"

The boy knew what the Bible says, but thought it only applied to very rich men—that is, men who had over fifty dollars.

That night they slept in the boiler-house again. Early in the morning the tramp proposed that they "get a move on" for the next place.

"But we have not been all over this town yet."

"I know; but it aint healthy here."

"Why not?"

"Oh, there is no refinement about the people, no culture."

"But we are introducing the Great Discovery, and the people are as good here as anywhere we have

been. Don't you remember that woman who patted me on the head and asked how old I was?"

"Yes, but it looks like rain!"

"What do we care?"

"Well, I'll tell you if you will promise never to reveal it!"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the first shower will wash every pot-hole stone we have painted, clean."

"So they will not shine at night?"

"No more than the inside of a rat-hole."

It was a cruel blow to the boy. He supposed they were doing an honest business, and the thought of deception troubled him more than the loss of the prospective fortune.

It required all the diplomatic skill the man could bring to bear to keep the child from leaving him then and there.

"Well, it's getting towards winter, let us strike for Chicago," said His Whiskers.

"What will we do there?"

"Oh, go to the Home for Unfortunates."

"But we are not unfortunates—we can work."

"Go 'way, at the Home you do not have to—only an hour a day sawing wood, then you get three checks, good for two meals and a bed."

"What kind of meals?"

"Why, soup, with chunks of bread and meat and carrots and spuds swimming around in it—but the beds are the finest in the land. One great big long sawdust pillow and shavings to lie in—fifty men all in a row."

“And you liked it?”

“Certainly—I was studying Sociology.”

“And you are going back?”

“Yes!”

“Well, you will go alone—not with me.”

“For heaven’s sake! Jimmy, how sassy you are getting! What is it you want, anyway?”

“How many times have I told you that I want to earn an honest living?”

The man’s countenance changed, his bantering manner ceased. He said: “Boy, look here. I will take you to New York and put you in a place where you can become a man.”

The child instinctively turned his head and looked at the speaker, the tone was so entirely different from what he had before heard. Some way, it came over him that at last this tramp was in earnest. The child did not reason this out logically—he only felt it.

Children divine things; men reason them out. The child is often nearer truth than the man. Women sometimes retain this intuitive faculty. You cannot lie to certain women—they read the heart. It is dangerous to tell a falsehood to a child; this little soul may be weighing you in the balances of God. Beware!

“Will you take me to New York?” asked the boy after several moments of silence.

“Yes.”

“And help me to find a place in some store?”

“Yes, or how would a newspaper office suit you?”

“Where they make newspapers?”

"Yes."

"Oh, I always wanted to work in a newspaper office. Do you think I could go in as errand boy and some time—some time write things that would be printed so that I would see them in the paper the next day?"

"Of course."

"But—are you sure that no one will find me in New York?"

"You mean your folks?"

"Yes."

"They will not find you; you are safer in New York than you would be hidden away in a forest. A big city is solitude. I have been more lonely in New York than I ever have been in the woods."

"But I will not be lonely for I will be busy. When do we start?"

"To-day."





CHAPTER XVI.

"Peradventure this is not fortune's work neither, but nature's."

THE wanderers got into a box-car and rode to Bloomington, arriving there in the afternoon.

"Now, James, my son, you want to make New York without loafing along the way—I'll show you how to do it. No-sir-ee, no tickets will I buy—it's a matter of principle—no tickets. Besides that, you will need your money for a better purpose. What good would our few dollars do a rich railroad company? No, sir—I am a stockholder in the Chicago & Alton—we ride free."

They found their way to the yards of the C. & A. and hid themselves in a lumber car, riding to Chenoa—twenty miles.

"We wait here for 'The Hummer'; she comes through about two o'clock in the morning—that gets us into Chicago in time for breakfast."

They boarded the train below the depot where it stops for an instant to get the target before crossing the T., P., & W.

The man went in at one end of the car, the boy at the other. The lights were turned low and people were piled about in all the uneasy and uncomfortable positions that are common in such places. Men, wo-

men, and children endeavoring to rest their aching bones ; two o'clock in the morning is the most trying time of night in a " day coach." His Whiskers saw a double seat occupied by a woman who leaned a tired head over against the window. Opposite her was a four-year old boy, and with her head in the mother's lap was a little girl.

" The cars are very full, madam, my son and I cannot find seats, let me hold your little girl ! "

The woman had doubtless come on a long journey—she was too weary to be critical—she knew it was a gentlemanly voice that spoke—of course she made no protest. In fact she had no time to. The man had pushed the boy into the opposite seat and laid the sleeping child's head in his lap and he himself was seated with the little girl on his knee in an instant. The train was again in motion and the restless sleepers snored, talked in their dreams, shifted positions,—all as usual.

The conductor had collected all tickets just after leaving Bloomington. The brakeman thought he saw a passenger get on at Chenoa below the crossing, but he was not sure. The conductor came through peering into the passengers' faces. " Can't you open the ventilators ? " asked His Whiskers, testily, as the lantern flashed in his face.

The conductor reached up, opened three ventilators, and passed on.

His Whiskers took a nap.

Just before they reached Chicago the conductor entered the car with a burst. " Tickets—everybody ! ! "

He picked up the bits of punched pasteboard right and left, but the man who was holding the little girl was very hard to awaken. Conductors on the C. & A. give checks to adults but no children, so the boy escaped.

"Wake up here, man!—your ticket!" was yelled in the man's ear, as he was shaken vigorously by the shoulder.

He was finally awakened, the ticket was searched for in many pockets, but could not be found. A lantern was borrowed and careful search was made under the seats, but all in vain.

"Where did you get on?" demanded the conductor.

"St. Louis."

"Through ticket for Chicago?"

"I told you so four times, idiot."

"Well, you must have a check."

"You did n't give me a check."

"I certainly did."

"Don't you call me a liar. Here I am a peaceful American citizen, travelling with my wife and little ones. Must I be bullied and insulted by the gilt-braided minion of a blood-sucking monopoly?"

His Whiskers had arisen to the full height of his outraged dignity. His voice was pitched to a key that could be heard in the next car. Any explanation from the woman was out of the question, and the conductor's words were completely drowned.

"A beastly, blood-sucking monopoly. Must decent passengers be browbeaten in this shameless manner? A spirit of tyranny runs through most large corpora-

tions : especially is this true of railroad companies. The chief stockholders threaten the directors ; the directors tyrannize over the general superintendent ; he does the same by the division superintendents ; the heads of departments lord it over the agents and trainmen ; the conductors over the passengers ; the division superintendent does as much for the section boss ; the section boss tyrannizes over his men ; the men over their wives ; the wives over the children, and the children give it back to the people. The people are the stockholders. Tyranny moves in a circuit ; innocence alone can ground the wire. Wherever you find a man gruff, surly, dictatorial, inconsiderate, uncivil, cruel to those beneath him, you may know that he is receiving the same treatment from some one else. We visit on others the treatment we receive. When a man is tyrannical to those below him, he is fawning, cringing, crawling to the one above. It is only innocence that refuses to kneel ; it is only innocence that does not tyrannize. I am innocent, so I never reproach others—never !”

Before this speech was over the conductor had retreated into the next car, and the wrathful tones of the speaker had slightly subsided.

The passengers listened with earnest nods of approval : especially a party of Russians who did not understand English. They only knew that the conductor had endeavored to coerce an innocent passenger and that this passenger had arisen in his might and defied the entire railroad company and the State as well. Such courage is always commendable.

The Russians were Anarchists.



CHAPTER XVII.

"Still we were coupled and inseparable."

CHICAGO is a great city. It is twenty-eight miles long and is destined to be the largest municipality in America. Chicago has eight thousand saloons. Chicago also has a Home for Unfortunates.

When the train reached Chicago our friends went straight to the "Home." They were given permission to split wood; a certain stent being laid out for them, which they completed in short order. Each was then rewarded with a generous dish of soup. In the woodyard the man saw several "unfortunates" whom he seemed to know. His Whiskers wanted to stay a week at the "Home" for repairs—to get "keel-hauled," as he expressed it, but the boy had his way and the man grumbly consented to leave the same day they arrived.

"If we take the Pullman we can make better time," explained His Whiskers, "but it is a little cool at this period of the year."

"What do you mean by 'the Pullman'?"

"Why, the 'hammock route.'"

“What ’s that?”

“Don’t you know? Swing a hammock under a Pullman and let ’er go. I have a hammock stored here—all woven out of the finest linen. It is just eight feet long and has steel hooks on each end. You fix your hammock when the train stops at a water-tank, then you tumble in and ride as far as you want. But you better crawl out just before you get to a big town, or you may be grabbed. Once I rode right into the Union Depot at Buffalo. I was sound asleep and one of those fool car inspectors crawled under the car with his torch and burned a hole in my new lavender spring trousers before I could yell at him. It cost me all the tobacco I had and a good knife to get off—he was going to turn me over to the police.”

The boy refused the “hammock route.” His Whiskers said it was not much difference, anyway—it would only take a couple of days longer.

They walked out to Englewood and managed to lay in several doughnuts, two “quarter-sections” of pie, and a piece of bread and meat for future use. This, besides satisfying present hunger.

At Grand Crossing they boarded the Atlantic Express on the Lake Shore road. They rode on the front platform of a mail car as all of the other cars had end doors. It was night, but the flashing light from the fire-box when the furnace door was open revealed their position as plain as day. After riding some miles they were discovered by the fireman, who began throwing coal at them. Two could play at that game. His Whiskers caught the chunks of coal

like an experienced base-ballist, and he threw them back as if he was pitching curves. One chunk came dangerously near the steam gauge, and the engineer here motioned to his fireman to let them alone.

They rode in peace to Elkhart, where they found a place to sleep in the round house.

Next day they reached Toledo on a stock train, getting there in the night. In the morning they "did the town"—got plenty to eat, with a whole pan of cookies which His Whiskers found in the kitchen of a house where no one was at home.

"The woman can thank her stars that I am an honest man or I would have taken the pan," mused His Whiskers, as he poured the cookies down his shirt front.

They took a freight to Fremont—then caught the Limited, but were detected settling themselves in a passenger car. The conductor pulled the bell-cord and Mr. Whiskers was asked to alight.

"Come, Jimmy, we made a mistake—we are on the wrong train." He shook hands with the brakeman, searched for his valise through two cars, and finally got off without it, the conductor fuming all the time. A brakeman was posted on the rear car to see that they did not get on again. Once after this they were put off before reaching Buffalo.

No man ever laid hands on His Whiskers—there was something about his hardy build and calm self-possession that said "Hands off!" But a brakeman once took the lad by the collar and he had no sooner done so than a voice hissed in his ear, "Don't touch that boy!" The brakeman was as startled as if he

had heard the ominous "sing" of a rattlesnake, and he took his hand from the boy's collar with a jerk.

The plan of riding only on the fastest trains at night, and boarding them at the first point possible after the conductor had collected the tickets, was a favorite one with His Whiskers. Then, if he could get into a seat and have a child on his lap he knew he was safe for a hundred miles at least.

They got to Buffalo the third day after leaving Chicago. Applying at the East Buffalo stockyards, His Whiskers was given permission by a shipper to accompany a car-load of horses to Albany. For his passage he agreed to look after the stock. He explained to the freight conductors along the way that Jimmy was his son and must be allowed to ride too. It was against the rules, but plausible argument and good nature won; and the boy and man feasted surreptitiously out of the trainmen's dinner baskets—taking pains to take only a little from each so the food would not be missed.

Arriving at Albany they warmed themselves in the lobby at the State House, visited the "Mission," where His Whiskers volunteered to play the organ. He also exhorted the brethren who were present. They walked ten miles to Castleton and boarded a through train to New York City, arriving at 7:15 after a grand row with the conductor.

"Don't talk back to me, Cornelius, I won't have it!" exclaimed His Whiskers. "Don't talk back to me—you have our tickets and you know it. I'll report you to Chauncey. You only want to get

cash out of us which you intend to 'knock down.' Oh, I am on to you. Put us off—that 's right, put us off. That is what I want. Put us off and I 'll sue your road for twenty thousand dollars' damages—yes, put us off—but give me your name first—give me your name and the number of your engine and your train number and your engineer's name. Yes, you won't give me your name, eh! Well, I 'll just take the names of a few of these passengers for witnesses, and then you will put us off."

A piece of paper was produced and a pencil then fished out, and the names of a dozen passengers written down with a great show of importance.

The conductor did not put them off.

Arriving at the Grand Central Depot they alighted with the rest of the passengers, and were curiously scrutinized as they walked hand-in-hand toward the waiting-rooms. Women stepped aside so that their clothing would not brush them. Men smiled. A policeman who saw them called another, and they both laughed.

They went to the lunch counter, and the girl refused to wait on them until they showed their money. The boy paid for the coffee and sandwiches, and this was the very first cent that either he or the tramp had expended since they had met, except the money paid for the phosphorescent paint materials.

They had travelled just twelve hundred and thirty-five miles and been together two weeks lacking one day.

"Now, Jimmy, I want you to wait here. I will be back in just two hours. Then I will go with you

and get you a suit of clothes, and as soon as you get washed up and rested we will go and see the newspaper man who will give you work."

"Let me go alone and get the clothes—I will be here when you come back in two hours."

"No, you will be cheated, you must do as I tell you."

"Do not stray out of this waiting-room or you will get lost."

"Please let me get the clothes?"

"No—do as I tell you—in two hours."





CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Who gave me fresh array and entertainment ? ”

THE boy sat in the waiting-room, and looked at the big clock that hung on the wall.

He mused : I wanted to go and get the clothes alone. I can pick them out ; surely I must make a presentable appearance, or the man at the newspaper office will never even give me a trial. Two hours is a long time to wait. The minute hand of that big clock just stands still for five minutes at a time, and then when it jumps forward it only marks a minute on the dial. I think I will get a dark suit—a sack coat, and a white linen shirt with a pretty stand-up collar ; I know what I want—I have the money to pay for the things too. Yes, I can feel it all safely knotted in the handkerchief, and pinned inside my blouse. How the people do keep rushing in and out—those coming in seem all out of breath ; they thought they had lost their train, but the man at the door told them the train would not go for an hour, and they must sit down and wait. And the woman with the big bundles, the two little boys, and the sick baby—how weary she looks. What would she say if I should go over and offer to hold the baby

a while for her. The policeman looks very fierce—has he killed many people?

Only ten minutes have passed by the big clock—it must have got tired and stopped. What does that man say who comes in and calls off the trains—no one understands him; he always says the same thing. Why don't they hang up a sign with big white letters when a train is ready, then every one can see for himself. Who is the woman who goes about with a dust brush? She wears a white cap and a big white apron; she must be the wife of the president of the road—she comes down every day to see that things are kept clean and neat. How much would a suit cost—eight dollars? What would the woman in the white cap say if I should ask her about how much a pair of shoes and a white shirt would be—she might be awful cross, and hit me with the duster. But no, she looks like a kind woman—she spoke pleasantly to the man who calls out trains—perhaps she has a boy of her own at home—if so, she surely would not be cross to some one else's boy. Would Mr. Whiskers be very mad if I should ask the woman the way to a clothing store, and buy the suit alone?

Only fifteen minutes have been marked off by the big clock. The woman with the duster is coming over by this seat—dare I speak to her? How my heart thumps—she certainly must hear it.

“Do you care, missus, if I speak to you?”

“No, my boy. What is it you want—you have not run away from home, have you?”

The poor child's heart thumped more than ever.

"No, ma'am. I was going to ask you about how much a suit of clothes for me would cost."

"Mercy, child! I cannot buy you a suit."

"I do not want you to, ma'am; I have the money, but I do not know where to go to buy the clothes."

The woman smiled good-naturedly.

"Well, you look funny enough in that long coat; I saw you when you first came in. If you have the money, you might get a good enough suit for—say seven or eight dollars—could n't he, Jake?"

The last words were addressed to the big policeman, who had come up unseen by the child. The policeman looked as big as Goliath. There he was with a belt around him that must have been ten feet long—and the club in his hand, but the woman would not let him do any harm, surely.

"What does he want, a hand-me-down, or a made-to-order? Stand up, kid; let us see how big you are!"

The child stood up. The coat he wore reached nearly to the floor, and the sleeves were rolled up, revealing the silk lining. The straw hat and the man's boots completed the picture. The policeman could not see the big, wide open, wistful brown eyes, and the wan, sad face. It was too funny! The officer laughed aloud, and motioned to the man who called out the trains to come and see.

"Well, he did n't run away, and there is nothing for you fellows to laugh so much about," said the woman, coming to the child's defence.

"Sure about his not running away, are you?"

"Of course I am; his father has just gone out around the corner. You don't want to get your new clothes until your pa comes back, do you?"

"Yes, I want to go alone and buy them," said the lad with a sudden burst of resolution.

The policeman seemed to have softened, for he took the boy by the hand, and led him out on Forty-second Street; then he gave very specific directions about going down "two blocks to Third Avenue, and turning up one and crossing over, and then keeping four doors down, and you come to 'Ullman's'."

"Tell them I sent you," added the giant.

The boy followed directions. He got to the store, and was treated with great deference, the clerk who waited on him even asked if his folks were well, and, without stopping for an answer, inquired if it was going to snow.

The boy picked out a neat dark suit, with knee pants, that seemed good and cheap. Then a cap, made of the same stuff. If he would buy an overcoat they would throw in a Waterbury watch. The temptation was very great, but the boy did not give in. He then bought one shirt, one pair of stockings, one stand-up linen collar, and one very red necktie was thrown in "in consideration of his using his influence among his friends in favor of Ullman's."

He promised.

Then the clerk went with him into the shoe store next door and introduced him as a very particular friend of Mr. Ullman's. He selected a pair of button shoes, and when he paid for them the shoeman pre-

sented him with a button-hook and told him to call again. Surely no place on earth is equal to New York, thought the child, only the people on the streets are in such a rush.

Just before he went into Ullman's he saw a striped pole which he was almost positive was a barber-shop. He had never been in a barber-shop, but after a careful view of the front of the place he read a sign "Hair-cutting and Baths."

He went in carrying his bundle of new clothes. The barber eyed him a little suspiciously, but seeing his bundle, asked him if he had been investing in a suit. One man sitting in a chair, his face covered with lather, said it was a waste of money, for the suit he had on was a perfect fit. Then the men laughed. Did he want to get shaved? No, a bath? Had he money? Yes.

He was shown into a bath-room, and when he came forth in half an hour, clothed in his new suit, the barber could not believe his eyes; he declared it was the greatest transformation he had ever seen.

"There is one thing wrong with you, young man," said the barber, as he walked around the boy, surveying him with the critical eye of a man of taste. "There is one thing wrong and that is your hair—it nearly gave me a fit when I glanced at your head, that fellow up at the corner did the job—I'd know his work anywhere. No, get right into this chair—the only thing to do is to use the clippers, then you come around in a few weeks and I will fix you out so that your hair will look as a fine-looking young gent's should."

After the boy had paid for the bath and the hair-cutting, he counted his money. The amount was just eight dollars and eighty-five cents. The money was then tied up carefully in the handkerchief and placed in the inside pocket of his coat.

“Oh, don’t bother with these old duds—leave them here and I’ll give them to the rag-man,” said the barber, as he bade him good-day and asked him to call again.

Surely New York City is a paradise filled with kind and courteous people. But the lad’s good opinion of New York was slightly shaken when he returned to the depot, and the big policeman scarcely glanced at him and did not return his nod. And the woman with the white cap and big apron did not even deign to look in his direction although she dusted all around him. It still lacked five minutes of the two hours. He was glad of that—he was afraid of being late.

The man who called out the trains seems to speak a little plainer now. How many well dressed people there are in New York! Most of the men wear overcoats, and many of them high silk hats. How did they make so much money as to afford such costly things? They must be Wall Street millionaires. Then there is a man with a gray suit on that looks like mine. Oh, if my suit only fitted like that—his clothes fit like the feathers on a bird. And then he had an overcoat too—did he get a Waterbury watch with it? My shoulders are not broad enough for my height, but still my suit looks pretty well although the policeman did not say so—I wish he would.

Twenty-five minutes past the time—where is he? He must have got lost in the crowd, he will surely come soon. How surprised he will be! I hope he won't be mad at me—I did not want to disobey him.

There that man is again with his gray suit—he has new shoes too, but his are russet and mine black. I like mine best. He has a new black derby and I have a cap—he is getting nervous waiting for a train to come with his wife on board I suppose. What a square jaw he has and face shaved smooth—I like a man with a mustache best. Smooth-faced men who shut their mouths tight look cruel. Wonder where the lady is going who has the pug dog on her lap. Thirty-five minutes past the time now—he will surely come soon.

The train must be late for that man is here yet—he is tanned, and has more color in his face than most of the New York men; they are nearly all pale. It will soon be an hour over time. I am afraid my clothes are not a very good fit—women know more about such things than men; my mother always made my clothes. My mother is thousands and thousands of miles away! It is the first suit of store clothes I ever had on. I will go and ask the woman anyway—she was very kind before—she should have spoken to me before, but I will speak to her the next time she comes over by the ticket window. Here she comes now.

“Oh, missus—say, please, I was—I was going to—to ask you how you like my suit!”

“Mother of Moses!—you aint that hoodlum who wore the straw hat and long coat?”

“Yes, ma’am—if you don’t care.”

“Why, there was a man in here looking for a ragged boy—I thought it must be you and I told him you went away, but I thought you were coming back. He aint here now—he got tired of waiting, I ’spose. Oh, yes, that is him now, the stout-built man in the gray suit, the one looking out of the window, I mean.”

The boy walked across the long room and standing near the man looked up in his face.

The man turned—started; then he stared; then he smiled; then he stooped, took the boy in his arms, and tenderly kissed his cheek.





HE STARTED, THEN HE STARED, THEN HE SMILED.

See page 120.



BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

“Nay, answer me : stand and unfold yourself.”

IF we had the space at our disposal, it might be a pleasant diversion to use a dozen pages for a *dénouement* in revealing the identity of His Whiskers ; it is not necessary. Long before this the reader has guessed that John Hillard, bachelor, of West 23d Street, New York, and His Whiskers are one and the same individual. It is a pleasure to write for discerning people.

We have shown that Mr. Hillard was surprised at the changed appearance of the boy, but he knew the lad had money enough to get a new suit, and that he should go and buy it and put it on was all very natural. The disappearance of His Whiskers and the coming of Mr. Hillard were supernatural.

The boy could not understand it, excepting on the score of magic—all children believe in the supernatural ; some grown people as well.

And yet this hocus-pocus does not satisfy—we seek for a cause

“Jimmy, you have played a great joke on me—you are a good-looking boy, and I am proud of you. Come now, we will go.”

The voice was the same—perhaps milder though ; the eyes were the same, too, but—no, it is another man.

“I am waiting here—I am—I cannot go with you, sir, I am waiting for my father!”

Mr. Hillard laughed.

The child looked at him in wonder. The boy had read the *Arabian Nights*—he knew of beggars having been changed into princes—here was an instance. This man before him had a round smooth face—His Whiskers had a stubby beard clear to his eyes. This man was handsomely clothed ; the other was in rags. This man carried two watches ; the other none. This man wore clean linen and a necktie with a scarf-pin ; the other’s shirt was dirty and flaring open at the neck. This man’s nails were pared, his hands clean, he carried a neat white handkerchief in his pocket ; the other’s nails were unkept, his hands soiled, and he had no handkerchief but the red apology for one, which he carried in his hat. Such was the rapid mental inventory the child took, and he summed it all up with the convincing proof that His Whiskers had no money to buy these things, and his mind fell back on the magic. All things are possible in the realm of the supernatural.

“We will go,” said the child. He took the hand of his friend, and they walked out to the street where a carriage was in waiting. “Hoffman House,” said Mr. Hillard to the driver. The driver touched his

hat. They seated themselves in the carriage. The door was slammed, and the lad wondered at the beauty of the driver's coat, with its big, shiny, flat brass buttons. He noticed the high silk hat, too, and he had an inward glow of pride to think that this fine gentleman, who drove the horses, touched his new silk hat to His Whiskers—and was n't Mr. Whiskers his father? No one knew the difference anyway. But, no, it was n't His Whiskers either. His Whiskers went off and got lost in the crowds that were rushing in every direction—he could not find his way back to the Grand Central Depot. A fairy saw him, and, knowing he had been kind to a friendless boy, this fairy passed her wand twice to the right and once to the left over his head, and—presto!

I wonder what is going on in New York to-day—there must be a circus or a “big meeting,”—all the people are out on the street. How beautiful the store windows are! I wish the windows in this carriage did not rattle so—I wanted to hear that hand-organ—would the driver stop if the gentleman who was His Whiskers, before the fairy touched him, should ask him if he would please? It's too far past now anyway. What funny men with boards on them, front and back, all covered with signs. They own the stores, I 'spose, and when they go out on the street they wear those things—it is necessary, though, for all the people look so much alike that no one could tell them. I wish the driver would go slow, I want to see the things in the windows. It is an awful big town, aint it? What would my mother

say to this? She would be afraid, I guess, and I don't believe my sure-enough father (not His Whiskers) could drive our horses down this street, where there is such a crowd. He could n't if he drove the colts, that is certain. He might hitch up one of the colts with the old mare, and then cut a good hickory whip, so if they got to backing up or trying to kick over the traces, or if they shied——

"Hoffman!" said the driver as he opened the door.

They went into a palace—finer than any that was even pictured in the old bound volume of *Gleason's Pictorial*. Then into a dining-room where there were hundreds of tables, all set as if Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman were expecting company. A gentleman wearing a swallow-tail coat bowed to them, and took the man-who-was-His-Whiskers's hat, and then he took the cap made out of the stuff like the suit, and another gentleman in another swallow-tail gave them seats at a table, and presented them each with a fan, although it was n't fly time. Then he brought two great long printed lists of all the finest things to eat one ever heard of. There were so many things the boy could not decide what he wanted. He was not hungry, he only wished to look around. "What do you want, Jimmy?" asked the man-who-was-Mr.-Whiskers.

"A bowl of bread and milk or a slice of bread and some cold meat," bashfully answered the boy.

The man smiled, and searching over the bill of fare he explained that these delicacies were not down.

He then told the waiter to bring raw oysters for two. They were brought—stingy little oysters for such a palace, the boy thought. Then the waiter brought in soup—not much though. The lad was disappointed, for his appetite was coming back. Nothing but soup, and so little in a plate that the boy sent the waiter back three times for more. Then to his great surprise one of the gentlemen in the swallow-tails brought on the dinner—the finest ever seen. Chicken, roast beef, turkey, mashed potatoes, squash, and more vegetables than one could possibly eat. The boy just then found out how thoroughly hungry he was, but what was the use! he could never eat all there was there! why did n't the waiter bring the dinner on before? Was he trying to be funny and play a trick on them? The boy watched his chance—no one was looking—he worked the plate of chicken over near his side and slid off a “drumstick” and a wing and put them in his side pocket—then he captured two pieces of bread.

It was plain now that the man who sat opposite was not His Whiskers, it was another individual entirely. First, he did not talk philosophy to any one—His Whiskers always “buzzed” every one in sight. Second, this man did not once think to lay in a supply, out of all the plenty on the table, for supper.

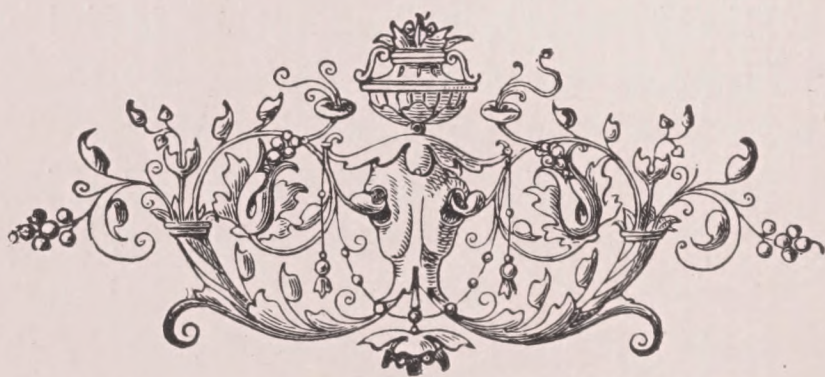
The lad ate until he felt that the waistband of his trousers was too small. Then, to his utter chagrin, the waiter took all the dishes off from the table and brought in pie, pudding, and a big dish of fruits and another of nuts. It was too much—it was the meanest kind of a trick. How did *he* know these

nice things were coming? He was full to the chin, when the waiter brought in two small cups of coffee—little play cups out of some little girl's tea-set. It was now evident beyond a doubt that the gentleman in the gray suit was not even a distant relative of His Whiskers, for he did not utter a word of complaint about the size of these cups. The coffee was very black, and the lad did not try it. The waiter then cleared the table and brought in two round, flat glass dishes, each on a red napkin that was on a plate.

"Lemonade!" said the lad to himself, "but rather weak," as he sipped it.

"Have you had enough to eat?" asked the gentleman in the gray suit.

"Enough for a week," seriously answered the child.





CHAPTER II.

"Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer."

THE sensation of riding in an elevator is a peculiar one when experienced for the first time. This snug little room, with its soft cushioned seats and mirrors, and the wire door that shuts with a click, and then the simple pull on a rope by a small boy and up you go.

Manhattan is the Enchanted Isle, thought the lad, as he and his friend got off at the fifth floor. Walking down a hallway where were glass doors with names painted on them, they entered an office where there were a dozen or more bookkeepers at work before high desks. At one side of the room a glass partition enclosed a row of small apartments, one of which they entered. A revolving bookcase, a roll-top desk, four chairs and a table made up the furniture.

A bright young woman was busily engaged at a typewriter. At the desk sat a man who was so intent on his work that he did not look up when they entered. When he did, it was with a shout of amazement.

"By the bones of the prophet! Is that you or your ghost, Hillard?"

"It's my ghost, Mr. White, but it answers the purpose," said Hillard, as he coolly sat down without even offering to shake hands with the man.

Mr. White got up and shook him by the hand and pounded him on the back.

"A ghost—well it weighs a hundred and eighty!"

"No one ever saw a ghost that weighed less!"

"But where in heaven's name have you been? Here we have been laying bets that you were dead. Burtis notified the police and wanted the harbor dredged, but I knew you would show up all right. Now, where have you been?"

"Oh, out west to see my folks. Let me introduce you to my nephew, Jimmy Smith. Is n't he a fine boy? Looks like me, don't you think so?"

Mr. White agreed that the boy was a fine one and that there was a marked family resemblance, although the boy had dark eyes and Hillard gray.

"Then your hair is red, Hillard, not even chestnut or auburn, just plain red, and your nephew's is—well—that is, it might be black if he had any. Your taste, of course. Give him a tight cut just as winter begins, and next summer let him wear it long. You always delight in defying society."

"Yes, my name is Ajax—defying society's lightning. Do you know what I want?"

"How could I when you do not yourself?"

"But I do this time."

"Well, you want a drink of whiskey."

"Right you are—but something else."

"Well, I give it up."

"I want you to take Jimmy Smith and make a man of him."

"Why don't *you*, you have nothing else to do?"

"Hold your jokes back for another time—I am in earnest."

"You want me to give this boy work where he can show what he is made of?"

"Yes."

"Do you not know that a big establishment like this kills a hundred times as many men as—it makes?"

"You are talking to a man fully as smart as yourself, Mr. White."

"You have not answered my question."

"I know that you sold papers on the street and started in here as printer's devil."

"Hillard, I thought you were looking so well that you had all the iron in your system in form of red corpuscles, but there is more 'tincture' than ever in your conversation."

"You are a nice man, Mr. White—your name is a symbol of your character—I have only two things against you; you are bald-headed, and you will argue."

"You want a place for the boy?"

"You are a mind reader."

"Well, I 'll take his name and address and the first vacancy——"

"You will give it to the fellow who happens in, forgetting all others—you have now a pigeon-hole full of addresses. Make a place for the boy!"

“But——”

“Uncle Rodgers was complaining that his work was behind, you remember, Mr. White!” modestly suggested the young woman at the typewriter, without turning her head.

Typewriter girls know everything. They never look up yet they know all visitors and all the secrets of the office. They pound the machine, yet hear all conversations. They know the rogues and the confidence men that come in to work their schemes, and they know the worthy among the beggars. If employers could consult their lady stenographers (this is a republican form of government—if we use the word “lady” at all we can apply it to stenographers) without making love to them, many a business man might be saved from a bad bargain.

Jimmy Smith stood with cap in hand and watched with open mouth the deft fingers of the girl as she struck the keys—such rapidity was astounding! The girl never ceased her work for an instant, yet her heart went out to Jimmy Smith. “He is innocent and he is worthy,” she said to herself, as she viciously pulled out one sheet and replaced it with another in a twinkling.

“That is so,” said Mr. White, “Uncle Rodgers may need him.”

Mr. White blew into a rubber tube and a whistle answered.

“Tell Mr. Rodgers I want to see him, please.”

Now Uncle Rodgers is in the basement and we are on the fifth floor. Uncle Rodgers will not ride in the elevator; he worked for Mr. White’s father

before the days of elevators, when the *Commercial* office was down on Cedar Street. Elevators are new-fangled things that may break down and drop to the basement almost any time. Uncle Rodgers will patronize the stairs, and as he is quite an old gentleman (sixty-nine), it will take him several minutes to get up here.

Let us fill in the time by telling a little about who Uncle Rodgers is. He has a little dry-goods box of an office in the basement, where he must burn gas all day. It is the old gentleman's duty to check up all bills of paper that are received. He sees that every bale or bundle holds out in weight and quality. Then when stock is wanted in the press rooms the order has to go through Uncle Rodgers' office. Once Mr. White helped himself to two sheets of card-board and failing to report the fact, the old gentleman threatened to resign and let the whole establishment go to perdition. "Your father was a business man, Charles White, a business man. He is dead now, sir,—I am glad he is, for I would not see him pained by the sight of such a son as you."

Charles White owned a half interest in the establishment, but he apologized to Uncle Rodgers—he even suggested an entry in the card-board account that would make it balance—"An erasure, never! You go out and buy two sheets of card board to replace those you took!"

Mr. White did so.

Uncle Rodgers wore a suit of broadcloth with doe-skin trousers as a gentleman should. He wore a stock and he wore boots, not shoes. On the street

he always appeared in a high hat. He carried a gold-headed cane that had been presented to him by the elder Mr. White thirty-seven years before. This cane was marked: "In recognition of faithful services."

Mr. Rodgers had watched the evolution of the paper trade. He knew bogus manilla from genuine, across the store; and "all rag" from "pulp filled" by the touch. He could tell a "cream laid" from white after dark, and an "antique" that tried to pass for "hand-made linen" never deceived him.

"Now what is it, Mr. White? I am very busy this morning and have no time to waste—you don't think we are paying too much for that rope manilla, do you?" piped the cracked voice of the little man, as he stuck his bald-head in at the door.

"No, the manilla is all right—come in. You know Mr. Hillard, don't you?"

"Indeed I do, sir. I knew his father before him and a fine man he was; he used to give all hands a turkey at Christmas; and never a year passed but what he sent the whole shop up the river on an excursion, and never did he dock a man's time when he was sick. Please be quick, Mr. White, I have a car of straw board coming in, and an invoice of 'Androscoggin'!"

"Don't be in such a rush, uncle, you will never get out of life alive anyway."

"It's well enough for you that sit around in the office to talk 'Don't be in a rush,' but what would become of the business ——"

"Never mind that; I know you are overworked. How would you like a good boy to help you?"

"You know what that last boy did?"

"No, what did he do?"

"Made three blots on my stock book—first in twenty years."

"Yes, but it was an accident."

"How about the mucilage he poured on my stool so I stuck fast in it."

"Well, boys must play pranks."

"That's right, you uphold them in their deviltry; that is why this place will go to smash as soon as a few of the old hands drop out."

"But a good boy—what do you say to a good boy!"

"There are none."

"Why there is one behind you—Mr. Hillard's nephew."

"I know Mr. Hillard's relatives—his cousin Paul is in Sing Sing for shooting a man. That is what comes from giving a child a Bible name."

"But this boy has no Bible name—his name is Jimmy—Jimmy Smith."

"James is a Bible name—perhaps Smith is too—he ain't a bad-looking child though, but you can't always tell—looks are so deceiving."

"Is your letter book indexed up to date?"

"No—a month behind."

"And the invoices?"

"They are behind, sir, too, since we took on the new line of fancy covers."

"Well now, Uncle Rodgers, give Jimmy a chance, let him come to-morrow and index everything right up to date and show what he is made of."

The old gentleman took the child out in the hallway and put him through a civil-service examination. He had him write his name, then add up a column of figures, then compute how much 1161 lbs. of No. 2 book would come to at $8\frac{3}{4}$ cents, less the freight \$7.20, and two off for cash ten days.

The boy answered the questions and figured out the problem to the satisfaction of the little old gentleman. "Come to-morrow morning at eight, and I'll try you—three dollars a week," and the old man dived down the stairway.

"What did he say, Jimmy?" asked Mr. White as the boy came in.

"Come to-morrow," smilingly answered the lad.

"And how much is he going to pay you?"

"Three dollars a week, sir!"

Mr. Hillard and Mr. White laughed aloud.

"You see I always let the old man hire his own help—it pleases him," explained Mr. White to Hillard. "But where will the boy board?"

"With me of course," answered Hillard.

"Then he can't work here."

"Why—you think I will spoil him?"

"I don't think so, I know it. What time do you get up in the morning?"

"None of your business."

"But it is, this time—tell me—what time do you get up?"

"Well, anywhere from seven o'clock to noon."

"Is that teaching a boy to be a man?"

"Well, I'll tell him to do as I say, not as I do."

"But the young learn from example, not precept."

The young woman at the typewriter had never once looked up or ceased the eternal click. She paused now, and stooping over her work corrected an error with a lead-pencil that she took from her hair.

"I think—I think my mother would board him," said the girl, as she put in a clean sheet and struck the space key five times; click, click, click went the machine, faster than one could count, and she was off.

Hillard looked at White—White looked at Hillard—the boy looked at both—the young woman looked at nobody.

"Go down in the basement, Jimmy, and ask Uncle Rodgers how much time you will have for dinner," spoke Hillard, gruffly.

The boy obeyed.

"Stop the music-box a moment, please, Miss Griggs," said Hillard. "Your mother would take the boy if you said so, would n't she?"

"Perhaps."

"Your mother is a widow?"

"Yes."

"Where do you live?"

"In Exeter flats—off Twelfth Street."

"How many in the family?"

"No one but mother, my little sister and myself."

"You support the whole party?"

"I can easily do it."

"Well, I'll pay your mother just five dollars a week to board that youngster, on condition that you let him think Mr. White pays for his keeping."

"I think four dollars is enough—we live very plainly."

"He says we have half an hour at noon, but we get off at five," panted the boy. He had run all the way upstairs.

"I live so far away, Jimmy, that Mr. White wants you to board with Miss Griggs's folks. Good-by, White—oh, by the way, Miss Griggs, I will bring Jimmy around at five o'clock this afternoon, and you can take him home with you—good-day."





CHAPTER III.

"For food and diet ; to some enterprise that hath a stomach in't."

A MONTH has come and gone since our last chapter.

"Don't smoke in here, Mr. Hillard—the insurance policies forbid it," squeaked Uncle Rodgers one winter morning, as Hillard sat in the little six by ten office.

"Can't I smoke, Jimmy?"

"You might smoke in a straw stack, but you cannot here," answered the lad, with a smile.

Mr. Rodgers had gone out into the wareroom, and the two were now alone together.

"You are a joker, Jimmy. I hope you have not been telling our little adventures to any one!"

"Trust me for that, I am too much ashamed of them."

They sat silent for a space—the boy working diligently making out shipping bills. As fast as he had finished one Hillard would take it and carefully scrutinize the cramped little schoolboy hand, and smile approvingly.

Hardly a day passed but Hillard dropped in to

ask about "the state of trade," and "the paper business." And strange to relate, instead of calling at the main office for his facts he made his inquiries in the basement.

Jimmy was getting along famously.

The first few days Uncle Rodgers was surly, crabbed, and suspicious. He knew the boy was like all others—worthless. He took him in simply to please Mr. White—just let the youngster stay a day or so to prove his utter inefficiency to do anything but make trouble, and then let him go.

"Smith, you aint so bad after all," he said on the third day as the boy handed back the indexed letter book. "You may some day be able to take my place; who knows?"

Uncle Rodgers noticed that "Smith" did not play with the mob of boys that worked up in the press rooms, and he also observed that he was promptly on time—always coming with Miss Griggs, "the stenog.," that he was respectful, and evidently had a very high regard for Mr. Rodgers's business ability. Mr. Rodgers was mollified.

"I will make a pretty decent fellow of that young Smith yet," he once said to Mr. White.

Rodgers gave young Smith lectures on ancient history, that is to say the founding of the *Commercial*, and the starting of the paper trade forty-four years before; of how the present Mr. White was a wild, harum-scarum young fellow until his father took him off the street and put him under Mr. Rodgers's care. All the business education he had he received from Mr. Rodgers, who was the head bookkeeper, until

they got the new system, and then he voluntarily consented to look after the paper stock, as there was not a single man in the building who could tell "white print" from "book."

Uncle Rodgers and the boy ate their lunch in common after the first week. The old man would often take the whole half hour telling about "old times."

On several occasions Miss Griggs brought her lunch down and they had a triangular picnic.

Uncle Rodgers was a bachelor and a gentleman of the old school. He treated Miss Griggs with the most marked deference, and the lad thought that his conversation at such times was not near as entertaining as when they were alone. He called the boy "Mr. Smith" when Miss Griggs was there, and he took little mincing bites and scraped all the butter off from his bread to put it on hers.

Then she invited them to come up and lunch with her one day. Uncle Rodgers took off his long linen coat that he wore in the office, and brushed his black one with great care. Then he adjusted his stock with much precision, before the little mirror that hung behind the door. After carefully plastering the very scanty locks over his bald spot, he stroked his high silk hat, set it on his head with a wicked little tilt over one eye, and, taking his cane, they mounted the stairs, the boy carrying his lunch basket and a peculiar black tin box which opened on hinges. This box looked exactly like two books, excepting when closely examined. On the back, in neat gilt letters, were the words: *Shakespeare's Complete Works*. This box contained Mr. Rodgers's dinner,

When they reached the private office of Mr. White, Miss Griggs had the little table cleared and covered with a sheet of white "No. 1 book," which Mr. Rodgers had sent up an hour before with his compliments.

Mr. White always left the office at 11.30, so the three were alone. Miss Griggs opened the two lunch baskets and Shakespeare's Complete Works, and set the table, while Mr. Rodgers made complimentary remarks about the grace a woman lends to every festive occasion. Then the old gentleman quoted a stanza from Scott: "O woman," etc.

They were seated, and eating; the excitement of the occasion had started Mr. Rodgers off on a chapter of history of New York before its degenerate days, when, without a moment's warning, in walked Mr. Hillard.

There was a little start of embarrassment, which Hillard quieted with: "Ah, ha! I'm just in time—never so hungry in my life. Here, Jimmy, take this half dollar and slip down to Macaroni's on the corner and get some oranges and Malaga grapes!"

Hillard drew up a chair, remarking that the table required four anyway, to preserve its equilibrium. The boy soon returned with the fruit, and a very jolly time they had of it.

The day before Christmas Mrs. Griggs was much surprised to see a grocer's boy come staggering into her little kitchen with two big baskets.

There were a fifteen-pound turkey, cranberries, mince-meat, apples, nuts, candies, and several other packages of things that people who live in the Exeter

flats seldom see, and, perhaps, are just as well off without.

"These things do not belong to me," protested the good woman.

"Griggs, aint it?" inquired the young grocer, and slid down the banisters without waiting for a reply.

Mr. Hillard often stood at the street entrance of the *Commercial* office at five o'clock. This was the time and place where Jimmy waited for Miss Griggs. Hillard would walk with them a couple of blocks, because "he was going up that way anyway."

Christmas eve, he was there as usual.

"It was very kind in you to invite Mr. Rodgers and me to a Christmas dinner, Miss Griggs," said Mr. Hillard, as they started up the street.

"I do not remember inviting you."

"Oh, I forgot—it was your mother. I gave the message to Mr. Rodgers—tell Mrs. Griggs we will be on time."

Christmas morning, when Mrs. Griggs opened her door to take in the milk, at the threshold were two big bundles. On unwrapping these, great were the cries of astonishment from the little girl. Jimmy had a cubby-hole of a room to himself, with a window that opened out on the hall. He was summoned with loud calls that "Santa Claus is here—come quick!" He hurried into his clothes, and Miss Griggs came too, in her stocking feet—she did not have time for her shoes.

There were a full dozen packages in the big bundles, each one having a name on it. There was stuff for a new black dress for Mrs. Griggs, an ulster for

Jimmy, and a dozen pairs of stockings, books, gloves, and ribbons for Miss Griggs, and more playthings for the little girl than she ever saw before outside of the shop window.

The people who lived on the lower floor at "Exeter" were quite surprised about one o'clock, to see two gentlemen who inquired the way to Mrs. Griggs's. One of these men was small, thin-faced, and wore a suit of faultless black. He carried a gold-headed cane, which he twirled jauntily. On his left hand was a yellow kid glove; its mate was carried between the fingers. The other gentleman wore a well-fitting suit of gray.

"They look like lawyers—I hope they have n't come to make Mrs. Griggs trouble," said the first floor.

Jimmy met the visitors at the door. They were ushered in and greeted by Miss Griggs, then presented to her mother. Mr. Rodgers bowed to the floor and kissed the finger-tips of the ladies. This stateliness of manner put the older woman in quite a flutter. How could she ever properly entertain two such eminent gentlemen!

Hillard thawed out the ice, though, in short order by a challenge to Martha to play grace hoops.

"Santa Claus brought them this morning and a whole lot of things, shall I show you?"

Hillard had captured the little girl, that was sure.

"No. We will play with the hoops first, and then look at the things."

The stakes were duly placed, and Jimmy threw first and missed. Then the little girl tried it with

no better success. It was now Hillard's turn. With great show of care he sighted for the stake and then tossed the ring. It went wide of the mark; in fact it went straight over the head and around the neck of Mr. Rodgers who was sitting very prim and proper in a high-back chair.

This accident made a great commotion. The children shouted with laughter which was so contagious that Mrs. Griggs threw her apron over her head and rushed for the kitchen to see that the turkey was not scorched.

Hillard was profuse in his apologies. "Never played the game before," etc.

"Then I will show you," said Uncle Rodgers.

He took hold and played with all the skill he could bring to bear, and was beating them all when Mrs. Griggs announced the dinner.

"Uncle Rodgers must carve," exclaimed Hillard.

"Please do not call me 'Uncle'; I'm as young as you. Do I look an old man, Mrs. Griggs?"

"I am sure you do not, sir," replied the widow, as she glanced at his weazen face and shiny pate.

Mr. Rodgers had read a book on carving, but had little practice in the art. The refractory bird was finally reduced.

Every one had a good appetite. Hillard declared that Mrs. Griggs was the queen of cooks. Uncle Rodgers wrote down her recipe for making mince-pies, and Jimmy argued with little Martha that turkeys had only one wish-bone.

"Then it's ducks that have two, aint it, Mr. Hillard?" appealed the little girl.

"Yes, ducks have two and guinea hens three, my dear."

When the coffee was brought in Mr. Rodgers arose and proposed a toast to the ladies. Hillard replied in a very funny speech and then sang a comic song.

The party adjourned to the little sitting-room where there was a melodeon that was given to Mrs. Griggs on her wedding-day, as she explained to Mr. Rodgers.

Mr. Rodgers sighed: "What a charming bride you must have been!"

Hillard sat down at the melodeon and sang *Where is My Boy To-Night*.

"Why can't we sing gospel songs?" asked Jimmy.

Miss Griggs found a copy of Moody and Sankey hymns and then they sang for an hour or more.

The little girl stood in a chair and recited a piece. Jimmy sang *Shall We Gather at the River* as a solo, all joining in the chorus. Mr. Rodgers and Mrs. Griggs danced an old-time minuet, just to show the young folks what graceful dancing was, and then Mr. Hillard sang *Down by the Deep, Sad Sea* to Miss Maud's accompaniment.

The early dusk of winter was gathering when all stood about the little melodeon and joined in *Auld Lang Syne*.

Mr. Rodgers kissed the little girl and the boy, pressed the finger-tips of the ladies to his lips, and declared it was the first real Christmas he had known since 1853.

Mr. Hillard shook hands all round, and taking Mr. Rodgers's arm the gentlemen departed.

"What a fine time we have had," remarked the young woman as she sank into a chair.

"I never knew a more charming gentleman than Mr. Rodgers," said Mrs. Griggs.

"Oh, was n't it just like heaven!" exclaimed the boy.

"Is there any of that turkey left?" asked the little girl.





CHAPTER IV.

"The time is out of joint."

"HELLO, Hillard, I want to see you. Come in to Tony's a minute, please."

It was Mr. White who spoke. The men entered and seating themselves at a table Mr. White nervously began:

"Hillard, I am your friend—you know that!"

"Of course."

"Well, may I speak with you frankly?"

"Certainly; let 'er go."

"Now you need not apologize or explain. I do not set myself up as a censor of morals, but here it is: You must cease your attentions to Maud Griggs! Quit it, at once. She is a fine honest girl and, if nothing worse, you must not turn her head."

"Must I quit it?"

"You certainly must."

"Need n't apologize?"

"No."

"I'm glad. Shall we go?"

"Yes."

"Well, not yet, White, I have been wanting to see you—I am your friend—you know that!"

"Certainly."

"May I be frank?"

"Yes—to be sure!"

"Well, White, you are a large mouse-colored ass."

"What's that?"

"You are a long-eared burro of the largest pattern."

"Why do you insult me, sir?"

"I do not insult you. I am only frank—I am not in love with your stenographer. If I was I would surely apply to her employer, who seems to be the guardian of her virtue, for permission to speak to her on the street."

"I did not say you were in love with her—you are not capable of love—I said you must cease paying her attentions."

"It's not her—it's her mother, White—I'm courting her mother—the charming widow Griggs—O, Griggsey, old boy, how glad I am that you are in Hades."

"Hillard, you are a fool."

"Then there are two of us."

"I am in no mood for trifling; will you let that girl alone?"

"I always have so far—but you suggest—I cannot say what I may do. Adam would never have climbed the apple tree if he had not been prohibited!"

"You have stood at the door waiting for her three evenings a week for a month."

"Have I?"

"You certainly have."

“ Mr. White, I will be serious with you—you are revealing myself to me—I did not know I had been waiting at the Commercial office—ah, I see it! White, I am insane—I care nothing for Miss Griggs—she has never entered my mind, excepting as your stenographer and the friend of my boy—Ah! not my boy, either, I mean Jimmy. The boy meets her there, I am a fool. White, I love the child, that’s all. I, John Hillard, who have scorned and scoffed at every kind of tie—who have boasted of my absolute freedom—here I am, insane—possessed of an hallucination, and think a vagabond of a youngster is my child. He used to call me father—that’s it. Do we crave affection, White; do we hunger for sympathy? My nerves are not right—it is this cursed city air—it poisons me,—these late hours—these balls and parties. I have been drinking lately too! These fools we meet, not one of them cares for me! They know I am a hypocrite—that child believes in me—He puts his little hand in mine so confidingly. Here I have come night after night just to feel the little handclasp, and to look into the only honest eyes I ever saw; and you think I am planning to undermine a woman’s happiness! You are like all the rest of them; you have no faith in me; no one has but that child, and he might not if he knew me—”

“ Hillard, you are drunk!”

“ Not I! I am nearer sober than I have been for months—I see myself as I am—leave me, White, go away—leave me alone. Even if you stay, I am alone; go away, I am alone, alone, alone!”



BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

*" Swift as a shadow, short as a dream,
Brief as the lightning of the collied night ;
The jaws of darkness do devour it up,
So quick bright things come to confusion."*

WESTWARD again our story takes its way. May has come, and Indiana farmers have their corn all planted. The tiny blades are coming up, and on fields over which the roller has gone we can make out the rows, and tell whether the planter did its work with precision. A Western cornfield must show a straight row in every direction.

In places where the soil is low and wet the corn, if planted early, will not "catch,"—it gets drowned out; and such spots must be gone over, and the missing hills filled in by hand.

Near all of the large cities in the Eastern States many women are to be seen working in the market gardens, but in the West, where farming is done on a large scale, it is seldom that women work in the fields. Women who do, are generally foreigners.

The first generation American-born, go on a strike. There is a quality in the air that says plainly: the heavy manual labor of farming is man's work. So be it.

Women at work in the fields in Montgomery County cannot fail to attract the attention of philosophers such as we. There they are—two girls, sixteen and eighteen, say, but not the fully developed women that we should expect at such an age.

Poverty arrests growth, yet poverty gives age before its time. Poverty makes wrinkles. Poverty and toil take the peach-blow from the cheek of youth. But hold! There is something that can sweeten even poverty! It is love. Love makes the burden light. Love gives strength to endure. Love upholds. There are no troubles where love is. Love is the mintage of the soul—rich is he who possesses it.

These girls know naught of love, that is sure. The stooping shoulders, the dull, lifeless yellow of the faces, the look of resigned submission to fate, only tell of toil—ceaseless toil.

The one redeeming feature of each is the eyes. Bright, big, open, hazel eyes. These eyes tell of possibilities that may spring into being if conditions are ever right. One girl carries a heavy hoe, and as she digs out with a few strokes a shallow hole where the corn has failed to come up, her sister counts out four grains from her basket and drops them. The hoe quickly covers them, and the girls pass on to the next vacant hill.

These young women wear coarse linsey-woolsey

dressess, heavy shoes, and sun-bonnets. Their hands are brown and calloused.

They have been at work since sunrise, and have hardly spoken a word. What is there to talk about? Their plans? These girls have no plans. Their hopes? They are dead. Their wishes? Alas, they dare not entertain any.

It was near ten o'clock.

"Come, Sally, we will go over by the Duck Pond next, there is a whole acre there drowned out, father said!"

Thus spoke the older girl. They walked across a knoll that seemed to overlook quite a stretch of country. Teams and men could be seen in every direction, working in the fields.

"Sis, just see, Sanders's boys have tied their horses to the fence and are running over toward the railroad!"

"What is the matter?"

"It must be a wreck—we could see it if we went over that way a little farther!"

Nature always avails herself of every excuse to give us a change. These novelties break up the ceaseless round of existence and make life possible. The observing man lives long. Curiosity is a virtue; a virtue is a blessing. A woman who has no curiosity is a fit subject for an undertaker.

"It's a wreck, Sis, it's a wreck; the cars are all piled up! Do you think father would be very angry if we should go over and see it—it's only 'bout half a mile!"

"We must not go clear over—but we will go a little way."

The girls put down the hoe and basket of corn and started across to where the piled-up cars were plainly seen. The farmers were running from various directions.

The young women kept drawing nearer and nearer. They stopped, and then they walked a little farther, each moment intending to go back to their corn planting.

At last they stood but a hundred feet away.

"Hello, girls! aint this immense?" shouted one of the Sanders boys.

"I think it is awful, *awful*!" replied the elder girl.

"Not so very awful—a hundred hogs killed—three cars smashed into smithereens. We are going to get the boys together and save the meat—the section boss said we might."

"How did it happen?"

"Oh, she broke in two and the hind end got to going down grade at the rate of a mile a minute. No one was killed though—no one but a tramp—see, there he is!"

The girls gave a start of horror—the shapeless black mass that was once a man was only a few feet away. The piles of merchandise, the strewn lumber, the upturned cars, the dead and maimed hogs, the scattered coal, had so taken their attention that they had not seen the battered piece of humanity.

"A whole car of coal was turned over him—they dug him out," said the young man. "Heavens! he aint dead though, he is trying to turn over."

"Go to him, Bill, go to him," exclaimed the girls.

The young man drew near.

"Water, water!" groaned the man.

"Give me your hat, Bill, I will get it," said the older girl.

She took the black felt hat and filled it from the ditch. Coming back she tried to give it to the man to drink, but he could not lift his head. She poured the water on his blackened face. It seemed to revive him.

"It's only my leg that is smashed—take hold of that foot and turn it as I turn, so I can get on my back."

The youth took the foot, and turning it slowly as the man turned his body; at last the sufferer was comfortably on his back—if we can use the word "comfortably" in reference to a man when the bones of his leg are sticking through his trowsers.

"Get a blanket, carry me to the nearest house, and send for a doctor—I can pay you," said the man from between his clenched teeth.

"He will pay you, of course," sneered a brakeman who now stood near, "he is a tramp—a fellow called Whiskers—he was stealing a ride."

"Of course we will take care of him," exclaimed the girl with a show of strength which surprised her sister. "Dare we have him carried over to our house—it is nearer than Sanders's?"

"No, not without asking father."

"But he has gone to Ladoga and will not be back until two o'clock."

"He will be mad!"

"Who cares," said young Sanders. "We will not let the poor devil die, even if he is a tramp!"

"I 'll get a blanket out of the caboose," said the brakeman, "four of us can carry him."

The blanket was quickly brought.

"Don't touch me, gentlemen; let me boss this job. Spread that blanket down beside me, and if you will turn that game leg again we will make it!"

The sweat stood out like beads on his coal-be-grimed face. With great effort he rolled over on the blanket. Four stout men took hold of the corners, and, preceded by the two girls, the procession moved off across the plowed field toward the house, a mile away.

A boy was despatched for the doctor with orders that he proceed to Mr. Goolson's with all speed.





CHAPTER II.

*"How does your patient, Doctor? . . .
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased? . . ."*

IF you happen to be a tramp and need the services of a surgeon, you had better send for a young one.

Old doctors work for cash, young ones (like authors) for glory. Sometimes a deal of work, no cash, and very little glory.

An old physician never gives his individual attention to any but "cash customers." This is because doctors are human.

The doctor that was summoned to Goolson's was a young one. Fortunately the messenger met him on the way, and he despatched this messenger for his case of surgical instruments and his box of splints. The doctor arrived at the house before the patient.

Dr. Parker has the heart of a true surgeon. He is a little man with big resolutions. I hope he will some day get out of the little town of Ladoga, Indiana, and gravitate to a great city where his genius may find room to flower. When he reads these lines let him take the hint—no charge.

No one was at home but Mrs. Goolson and her ten-year-old daughter when the little Doctor arrived. He explained without excitement that a man had been hurt on the railroad and was being brought over there. Without asking permission he went into the front room and opened all of the windows and doors and carried out all of the furniture but the bed that stood in the corner, for this room did the double duty of "spare room" and parlor. Then he brought in two saw-horses and two boards, over which he laid a clean sheet that he took from the bed.

When the wounded man was brought in, the little Doctor had off his hat, coat, vest, and collar. His shirt sleeves were rolled above his elbows and fastened with shield pins at the shoulder.

He motioned that the man should be laid on the table.

Where is the man who has ever stood at the operating table and failed to worship at the shrine of the skilful surgeon? This man with bared arms, in the white apron, who never speaks unless it is necessary,—what strength, what deftness, what delicacy of touch, what courage, what repose! The students in medical colleges have a high regard for the Demonstrator of Anatomy, but the Surgeon of the Clinic they deify.

Doctor Parker told the four men who carried the patient, to remain. He took a big pair of shears and quickly cut the entire clothing from the patient. He looked the body over from head to toe.

"Do you hear, man? It's your left leg—nothing but mere bruises elsewhere. The leg is broken, an

oblique fracture above the knee, the patella displaced, a bad compound fracture below. The leg should come off if we want to save your life. If we try to save the foot—inflammation, erysipelas, gangrene. Have you been drinking much whiskey?"

The Doctor passed a damp towel over the face to take off the coal dust. The countenance was ghastly white (how quickly the tan and color fled!), the eyes closed, the mouth shut. Not a groan.

"No whiskey lately—save the leg, Doc., I have only the two—they work best in pairs."

"I was in Rush three years, Bellevue one, said Dr. Parker. "You have more nerve than any man I ever saw. I will save the leg."

This Doctor had the true surgeon's instinct; he doted on an amputation; he delighted in lithotomy; he revelled in tracheotomy; he gloated on the prospect of removing cancer.

"Let me perform the Cæsarian section successfully and I will die content," he used to say. He would much rather have amputated this tramp's leg than set the fractures. A badly set limb means disgrace and a possible suit for malpractice; an amputation tells no tales.

But Dr. Parker could resist temptation, so he went at it. A delicate job, to get those jagged ends of bones and torn flesh in place. When they had one fracture set the others slipped out; again and again this happened. Dr. Parker knew no such word as fail. At last the plaster-of-Paris bandages were put on, the splints adjusted, and the task was done.

The Doctor bathed the man, demanded clean cloth-

ing from Mrs. Goolson, who produced it ; the patient was laid on the bed and seemed to be resting easily.

The saw-horses were carried out ; all were sent away save the family, and the Doctor was washing his hands at the sink in the kitchen. He joked with the girls. We are always gay after work well done. "Your tramp may be an angel in disguise, who knows !"

"We will take care of him anyway—we should not expect money for rescuing the dying !"

"Oh, yes, that is all right ; but what will your father say ?"

"I know what he will say, but there are four of us—only women, to be sure, and Mary Jane is only a child. Let us stand together—sh—sh!!"

A step was heard.

The women all made pretence of being at work. One seized a broom, another a wash-cloth, another a pan ; the little girl pretended to be reading from a dog-eared spelling-book.

A tall man entered, serious, sober, fifty years of age, perhaps. He wore a full beard with shaven upper lip.

"I heard of it at the village. You need not tell me. It is you, Sally Goolson—you are the guilty one. You told them to bring the vagabond here—do not deny it ! Why are you and Sis not in the field. Did you finish that planting ? No, of course you did not ; you will do nothing unless some one follows you with a stick. Now, this miserable tramp must be carried out of here at once——"

"But, Mr. Goolson, the man is very badly hurt.

Shut that door, Sis. I say the man cannot be moved——”

“He was stealing a ride—yes, he is a thief. Must my wife and daughters nurse a thief! They have no time. Besides, we are poor people. Take him to town, and let those rich folks——”

“Come here, you three women!” exclaimed the Doctor. “Come here, you three women, and you Mary Jane too. Now then, will the tramp stay or go?”

“He will stay!” spoke four low voices in concert.

“One word with you, Goolson, before I go—only this: My mother has a fine feather bed over home; I know where there is a barrel of tar; I can call together a hundred men in an hour.”

The man’s face blanched; he stuttered something about poverty and being willing to do his share, etc. The Doctor did not wait to hear, but turned to the women.

“Now you remember what I told you about his diet—you know what I said to do if he got restless—and you know where I am if you want me.”

He glanced at the tall man, who stood glowering at him. “Good-by, I’ll be over in the morning.”

The Doctor’s horse was at the door—a moment later the galloping hoof-beats died away in the distance.



CHAPTER III.

*"Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude."*

ACTION is crystallized thought.
Violence may be in the heart, yet not always find expression in deed. In fact, it is the exception when it does.

Farmer Goolson did not act ; he just pouted for a week. He did not at all relish the idea of having this unwelcome visitor in his front room, especially so, when he had protested against it, and then been coerced into silence.

Another thing that galled him was the fact that never before in the Goolson house had the feminine opinion been set up against the masculine with success. Then the Doctor had hinted at "White Caps."

"I'll keep quiet," said the farmer to himself, "and get even later on."

No man likes to be ordered about by a woman—unless he happens to have for her the grand passion; then he rather likes it. But only one man out of a hundred is capable of the g. p. Goolson belonged to the ninety and nine. He loved no living being,

he loved nothing—he did not even love a horse or a dog. He professed to love his enemies, but people who make this claim generally equalize matters by hating their friends. Yet Farmer Goolson pretended that he loved Jesus.

Jacob Goolson's horses told the tale. A horseman can look at a team and know exactly what sort of a man the owner is.

The horses that pull the heaviest loads and do the most work are often sleek, fat, contented ; and when they draw near home, after having been at work ten or twelve hours, they will toss their manes and frolic in glee. Take off the harness and turn them loose they roll over five times, then get up and kick their heels in the air, as much as to say : “ Who cares—life is not so bad after all.”

It depends on the driver.

Then there are horses that are always tired, distressed, spiritless. They balk at the foot of the hill or on the bridge, or kick (if they have life enough) when they should hold the load back.

Just look at the owner and you will know the reason. He leaves his team unblanketed, tied for hours in the wind ; he feeds too much at a time and not often enough, or he feeds too little. He whips when going up hill, and nags, jerks, and hastens the speed when going through mud. A horse treated in this way arrives at a point where he is only half a horse ; keep at him, and he loses even the spirit to protest ; but he gets even by being able to pull only half a load, and often he leaves his heartless owner hopelessly stuck in the mud five miles from home.

In July, 1893, there was a thousand-mile horse race from Chadron, Nebraska, to Chicago. Each rider had two horses—he rode one and led another. Forty-seven men started—three went through and rode an honest race. The man who won carried no whip, wore no spurs, and used the easiest bit made. He changed horses every few hours, riding one horse, the other followed loose. A horse that is led by a rope tied to his neck grows weary and chafes under restraint—this one was free. Two thousand miles were made in twelve days or at the rate of eighty-five miles a day. The rider and horses arrived in good condition. Think of the unquestioning loyalty of that little horse that followed his mate day after day through the burning sun! The man loved his horses; they believed in him—Love and faith!

Once there was a man by the name of Job. He wrote the oldest and most valuable book of the Bible. Job loved a horse. Listen!

Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible.

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength, he goeth on to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha! and he

smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting.

Mr. Goolson's horses were "plugs": thin in flesh, dull, spiritless, lifeless.

Goolson was well off, as Indiana farmers go. He owned a farm of one hundred and sixty acres; his house had a veranda on it, but no mortgage.

"The poor are those who feel poor," said Ralph Waldo Emerson. Goolson felt poor. He pleaded poverty continually; he talked of the time when they would all go the Almshouse.

He scolded his wife for extravagance. She had nothing to be extravagant with. One black dress had lasted her for ten years, and the Sunday bonnet had been trimmed, retrimmed, and fixed over as long as Mary Jane could remember.

He chided the girls for their inefficiency and throttled any attempt on their part towards adornment. He quoted St. Paul to them: "Let women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." He thought "shamefacedness" a virtue. He shrouded all glee as in a winding-sheet.

It was a continual regret to him that he had no boys. He seemed to blame his wife for this omission—forgetting that marriage is an equal partnership. "Nothing but girls," he used to say to the little, patient, tired woman. "Nothing but girls—they cost twice as much to clothe as boys, and only do half as much work—besides there is the danger of them disgracing us."

Having no boys and being too poor to keep a hired man the girls were taught that it was their duty to work in the fields. They did so—broke stalks, plowed, harrowed, planted, rolled, cultivated, harvested. They never complained—not to their father; not often to their mother. When they did, the world-weary little woman would kiss their yellow cheeks and say: “It is all for the best, you must respect your father, dears,—we are so poor.”

Goolson had no carriage, no spring wagon; he had a farm wagon, but the seat had no spring—only a board laid across the box.

On Sundays all would go to church, the man seated on the board seat, all the rest sitting in straw which was thrown into the wagon-box. They never failed to attend “divine service”—no matter what the season or how stormy the weather. Wednesday evenings this man went to prayer-meeting at the town five miles away, and he took one of the girls—a turn about. This was held out to them as a pleasant diversion for well-doing. It was the only diversion they had.

He subscribed to the preacher’s salary; then, when there was a donation he would take three pumpkins which would be duly deducted at double market price from the amount of his subscription at the end of the year. This was just—he paid for everything *he* received, why should any one have something for nothing.

No one ever accused Goolson of heresy. He believed in the Thirty-nine Articles, and regretted the number was so small, as he thought credulity a vir-

tue. He shuddered to think that any one could doubt the doctrine of "total depravity," the logic of the damnation of infants or the gentle justice of a hell prepared by a wise and loving father. He fixed his faith on a two-by-four plan of salvation and was only intent on saving his own soul.

At each meal he said grace, and family prayers were held each morning. He frowned down all signs of levity by saying: "For every idle word that man shall speak he shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment."

He insisted that his children should go to bed when they were not sleepy, and get up when they were. Hilarity to him was a sign of depravity; playfulness was the spirit of the devil manifest.

Little minds need to practise despotism to relieve the nerves, just as great souls demand high friendships to exercise their affections. He considered his harshness a benefit, and thought his spying watchfulness a loving care. His retreating forehead was marked by three long wrinkles. This little head reasoned neither good nor ill: it did not reason at all. He was "fetched up pious," and labored to increase the gloom which he thought was pleasing to God.

His nature shrivelled and grew cold through the years of ceaseless toil. He was irritable and therefore irritating; he was the slave of sordid economy.

In the atmosphere of such a man the sprightliness of youth was superseded by a dead passiveness—a dull, dumb acquiescence. The wife was drilled into the belief that to think for one's self was sin; the

children were misjudged—all were misunderstood, censured. Every innocent smile was construed into a manifestation of the “carnal nature.” The fresh, fragrant flowers of affection that spring forth in the childish heart were piteously crushed.

Yet this man was honest, truthful, industrious, temperate, sober, chaste; he was virtuous, that is to say, he was moral.

There is a morality that is immoral. A man may be moral and yet kill with the pin thrusts of persecution.

Against this there is no law.

Goolson saw the submissiveness, the dull indifference, the melancholy, the settled wretchedness of his wife and daughters, and he mistook it for piety. He gave himself the credit for this humility,—rightly.

He said: “Only my loving admonitions saved them—they are brands snatched from the burning.”





CHAPTER IV.

*“ Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh,
As benefits forgot.”*

THE next morning after the accident, the Doctor came. He held the patient's hand, he looked into his eyes, he examined his tongue, he took his temperature.

“ I was three years in Rush and one year in Bellevue ; you are getting along famously.”

The women took turns about, sleeping on the floor by the sick man's bed, in order to wait on him if necessary. The Doctor came every day—sometimes twice—it was a peculiar case.

“ I was three years in Rush and one year at Bellevue ; I never saw so bad a comminuted fracture where they did not amputate. If that leg gets all right I will crow like an Indian Game !” he said to Sally one day, confidentially.

The sick stranger talked but little—he was patient, grateful for all attention. He called the older girl “ Sister,” and the other “ Miss Sally.” He spoke of Mrs. Goolson as the “ Gentle Lady,” and sometimes called her “ Mother.”

A week passed. Goolson had not hinted in any way that he was aware that the sick man was in the house. He read the chapter from the Bible and prayed each morning. He said grace at meal-time, but he asked no blessing for the stranger within his gates. The eighth day he went into the sick-room and seated himself by the bedside. He stared at the sick man.

"What is your name?"

"Smith!"

"You are a tramp?"

"Possibly!"

"You have no money?"

"Have n't I?"

"And yet you told my daughter that you could pay."

"Did I?"

"You surely did—You have deceived us."

"It was the first lie I ever told—forgive!"

"I cannot forgive sin, only God can forgive. You are not a Christian!"

"I am a tramp."

"I hate tramps."

"Of course you do, for you hate everything. But let me show you that the members of my profession are not wholly bad: The tramp is receptive, has no prejudices (except against work); he meditates. He harkens to all philosophies; if he knows the troubles of life, he also knows the joys. He is a lover of nature—knows all the birds, and listens to their song, for he can spare the time.

"You farmers never spare the time for anything.

You tremble at the rustle of the mortgage ; for me it has no fear. You expect some day to go to a poorhouse ; I have already been there. You look upon death as the worst evil that can befall a man ; I regard it as a blessing. You hope some day to move to the city ; I love the country. You pay money to support a church and this church can call you up for reprimand if your action does not conform to its usage ; no church can ‘ church ’ me. You fear to go by a graveyard after night ; I sleep in graveyards for luck. You endeavor to act so your neighbors will think well of you ; I have no neighbors. You visit with a few ; I am at home with all. You associate with a class ; I, with all classes. You have feelings ; I have thoughts. You are hard to please ; I am always pleased. You fear a revolution ; I pray for it. You quarrel with your wife ; I wrangle only with men. You ask a blessing only when you sit down to eat ; I ask a blessing on every act of life. You are a literalist ; I am a poet. I stick out my tongue at poverty, I make mouths at wealth, I laugh at life, I smile at death.”

“ Well, I don’t want to hear any more of your talk ; you must leave my roof ; my wife and daughters must not be contaminated by such as you.”

“ How must I go, walk ? ”

“ No ; simply tell the Doctor when he comes to-day that you want to be moved over to the town—to the hotel—to some rich man’s house—anywhere ; you can’t stay here. My wife has no time to wait on you ; I need the help of the girls—we are poor folks—you lied to us ; you can not pay, you must go.”

"Have pity!"

"Not for you."

"You asked me if I was a Christian—are you?"

"I am."

"If a man who has not where to lay his head and is sorely wounded, is it showing a Christian spirit to turn him away?"

"You are blasphemous."

"I am frank."

"You were stealing a ride or you would not have got hurt—you are a thief and my conscience will not allow me to harbor you!"

"You complained because I had no money—would your conscience allow you to harbor a thief who could pay?"

"You are impudent."

"Mr. Goolson, I have concluded to stay here; it will be a month before I can use a crutch. It will then be another month before I can walk. It may take a month after that for me to get my strength. I have important business elsewhere, but I will stay right here."

Goolson was a coward.

Cowards sometimes whip women, beat children, they might even attack a sick man. Goolson started toward the man with clenched fists—he stopped—there was something about the cold, stony stare of those steel-gray eyes that kept him back.

"So you are going to stay here in spite of me, are you, scoundrel?"

No answer, only that calm, piercing look.

"You intend to stay, do you?"

Silence.

Silence is strength. Silence baffles, protests, protects. Silence defeats malice, unhorses hate, disarms wrong. Silence is tempered steel. Only the strong can use this weapon; few can draw the bow of Ulysses. Goolson might have stayed and argued the case for hours—he was an expert in abuse—but silence defeated him.

He stood it for a full minute and then burst from the room. It was a month before he saw the patient again; not once in all that time did he speak of him to wife or daughters.

The next time he looked this tramp in the face, it was under peculiar circumstances.





CHAPTER V.

*"Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are."*

GIVE a womanly woman some loving service to perform and she is happy. Women would rather do than be done for ; therein do foolish men often err.

"It is better to give than to receive"—words of truth. It is a deep trait in human nature that we love those on whom we can bestow benefits. The woman who suckles a child loves it whether it is her own or not.

Many a woman dies for lack of the privilege of doing something for somebody. Her nature is to assist ; let this spirit of helpfulness find right exercise and she is content.

These women found a happiness in doing for the helpless man who had come under their roof. He needed help ; they were able to give it. Unlike any other man they ever knew, he was grateful—he spoke to them gently, considerately.

The two elder girls worked on the farm or herded cattle during the day, and the mother and little girl did the housework.

When the girls came from the fields, the first thing they would do was to go to the bedside of the man. He would smile and ask them about their work and they would seem pleased to know that he was fairly comfortable. In this way he broke up the dull, dead monotony of their lives, and the sun seemed almost to come out at times.

The Doctor came every day and generally stayed an hour. He found this tramp a curiosity : he knew something about everything—medicine, theology, science in all of its branches.

The Doctor sought to investigate his history, but at such times “Smith” would start off on some speculation about the science of aëronautics or something else equally abstruse.

“Do you know, Doc., I have been compelled to keep silence for a week, and have accumulated a large amount of compressed conversation, which I must work off. My being here is an actual benefit to these women. The old lady laughed to-day, the first time for a year, I’ll bet. You see, they have a sort of love for me—the kind of love one might have for a pet wolf, to be sure, but love it is ; the poverty of our language will not admit of our using any other word.

“The exercise of this love is doing them good.

“Now in all lower forms of animal life we plainly see that self-preservation is the first and only law of instinct. From the oyster that closes its shell on the approach of danger, to the formation of the shell itself, all is for self-interest and for its own good.

“In all life, from the clam to the lion, the guiding motive is self-interest. The swift-running deer flees from danger when he can; but when wounded, turns on his enemies with antlers and feet. Wild animals are never caught in morasses, so strong is their instinct for self-preservation; and the beaks, talons, claws, teeth, horns, antlers, hoofs, shaggy coats, and thick hides, are but for the better protection of life to the owners.

“In the vegetable world we see the same law. On the north side of trees the bark is heavy and coarse, as a protection from snow and ice. In any region we can always tell the direction of the hardest storms by examining the roots, which are so placed as to give the strongest brace. The mighty height of the Wisconsin pine and of the California redwood, is only a reaching out to the sunshine,—an endeavor to get away from the competition of opponents that are trying to overshadow them.

“Now it must not be denied that man is as much a work of Nature as a dumb animal, or a tree. Nature’s heart-beat throbs through our veins just as the mother-life supplies life to the babe unborn. And when we say that self-interest is the leading motive of human conduct, we are only calling attention to the outcrop of the same principle which runs throughout both kingdoms, viz. : that self-preservation is the law of life.

“So we can see that these controlling impulses of Nature are for good.

“The strongest impulse of the great soul is to love and be loved again. It is God’s plan for bringing

about a higher development. Love is a form of self-preservation. It is to keep our souls alive.

“Although it is egoistic, it is also the most altruistic thing which we know.

“I think the broken leg and this experience here is doing me good. Someway I see things a little differently—I am putting a little more heart into my philosophy as I lie here so helpless during the long days. Do you think, Doctor, that getting hit hard and laid low by fate could do a man good?”

“Why, that is what the preachers say!”

“Well, the preachers may be right—but, look you, Doctor, these women will yet bless the day that they have known me.”

“You mean you will reward them?”

“Yes.”

“You will forget all about it when you get well.”

“Not I—let the future tell.”





CHAPTER VI.

*"Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form."*

TEN days passed. It was night. The household were all asleep but "Smith"—the sick man.

It came to him all at once and he cursed himself for his stupidity in not perceiving it before. He longed for daylight to come that he might question Mrs. Goolson, or one of the girls, and thus verify the thing which he confidently knew was true.

He tried to doze off and thus kill the dragging moments.

The clock struck three, four, five, but there was no sleep for him—an idea possessed him. These were his thoughts:

"That boy—why under the heavens did I not ask his name—but I did, and then I told him not to answer. What did I care—a name is only a breath. He did not know *my* name until we got to New York.

“Two older sisters, one younger, and a mother who is sick most of the time—yes, that is what he said—and the religious father who worked incessantly and made every one else do the same. Ah, yes, the brutish, fanatical, senseless father whose frozen religion is only a concrete fear,—this is the very man who drove my Jimmy from home!

“But what capers fate does play! How our lines do cross! It is only a little world after all! To think that I, who have visited every part of the earth and never before met with an accident, should get smashed up right here and be brought into the very household from which my boy was driven!

“After all, is there not an allwise Providence? I have scoffed the idea and yet——

“But I am glad the boy was driven out—it was for the best. Even suppose he were happy here—he could only have grown into a hard-working farmer. Sleepy, safe, and soulless, here he would have lived out his life. But now he is where his powers can expand—Mr. White will promote him soon and give him a chance in the general office, and who knows, he may make one of the strongest newspaper men of the country! He is wonderfully alert—he is ambitious—he will know the whole business from cellar to garret in five years—he needs no other school than the attrition of life. I have had College and done nothing—he has had the University of Hard Knocks and will win because he has the passion for success; thus he will acquire the things that it is necessary for him to know. Dare I tell his mother that he is

safe? She will then insist on knowing where he is, and then she will tell her husband. No woman can keep anything from her husband; and if the man knows, what then? will he go and bring him back? Ah! but I will not tell them where he is, I will only lighten the sorrow of this grief-stricken mother by telling her that her only boy is alive—then I will close my lips.

“Will morning never come! There, the roosters are crowing and the animals are calling for their feed. Yes, at last, at last it is getting near morning.”

After breakfast the girls and their father went to their work in the fields. The good mother brought the invalid his breakfast, first tenderly bathing his face and hands.

“I cannot eat much, mother—I want to speak with you before the Doctor comes,” said the man.

“But the Doctor said you should talk but very little.”

“I know, but he lets me talk to him, though—tell me, did you have a son?”

He watched the yellow, careworn face, for he thought it would start with expectancy, but no ray of hope shone across it as she answered in the same sorrowful minor key.

“Yes, oh, yes—I had a son—only one boy—but he is gone.”

“What would you say if I told you he is safe and well?”

“Yes, yes, I know he is safe—he is well, for he is in heaven,” sadly answered the woman as she went about her work.

“But he is not dead.”

“Ah, you have read the Bible, I am glad. No, ‘he is not dead but sleepeth’—he will rise again at the last day. Next Sunday Mary Jane and I will go to the woods and gather wild flowers, and then we will walk over to the little cemetery on the hill and place the flowers on his grave. When you get able to walk you will go with us sometimes, won’t you? I know you are a kind-hearted man—you have been unfortunate—that is all. You must not mind my husband—he is a good man, only peculiar. You can stay here as long as you wish—I will take care of you—never fear. Would you like to see my boy’s clothes?—here they are in this drawer—see, this was his little jacket and here is his cap. I had to give his shoes to Mary Jane—we are so poor. I wanted to keep the shoes, but my husband would not let me—we could not afford it. My boy, my brave little boy, my only son—but there are things worse than death, Mr. Smith!”

The tears were streaming from the woman’s face, and she was using her check apron for a handkerchief, when the Doctor entered without knocking, as was his custom.

“Hello here—what’s this? You two crying? Well, I’ll be vaccinated! Aint you getting along all right, Smith? Let me see—yes, you are just a leetle—just a leetle feverish. But that is nothing; let me see your foot—why the circulation is all right—we will save that leg. I was three years at Rush, and one at Bellevue—I’ll write an account of this case to my old professor, and let him print it in the

Brief. I say, Mrs. Goolson, get me a glass of fresh water, please. The aconite will keep down the fever. You two have been comparing your troubles, I suppose—poor business, poor business; quit it. God help us! I know there is misery in the world, but the stuff grows by recognition—why inventory it—why dwell on it? We all have much to be grateful for. There is more happiness than trouble after all. Aint I right, Smith?”

The woman had gone out to the wood pile, and the two men were left alone.

“Never mind the philosophy, Doctor—tell me, do you know anything about this family?”

“Do I? Well, all I want. The old man is a Calvinist gone mad—he has all the blunders, and none of the benefits that are in the cast-iron creed. He is industrious, but even industry can be a vice when it degenerates into mere pismire activity. Why, he makes the whole family work in the field at harvest time—gets them up at four o’clock in the morning. But the old woman is all right, and so are the girls.”

“I know; but did they not have a boy?”

“Well, now, I cannot say. I never attended them in an obstetric case, but seems to me old Doctor Tomkins said they were always girls. But yes—come to think—they did have a boy—he died of typhoid while I was away to school. You see I was three years at Rush, and one at Bellevue, and a fellow loses track of folks. It’s near five miles to town, and the Goolsons ‘don’t have nothing to do with nobody nohow,’ so we do not hear much about



“ I WAS THREE YEARS AT RUSH, AND ONE AT BELLEVUE.”

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them. I will tell the old woman about this medicine. You are all right, Smith—you are getting along famously. I have several other calls to make, so we cannot visit this time. Good-by! Yes, tomorrow or day after, sure. Good-by!”

“After all,” said Smith to himself when the Doctor had gone, “it would have been a thousand times as wonderful if it had been as if it had not—only a series of coincidences, that’s all. There are many cruel fathers; there are many careworn, unloved mothers and girls. Yes, you find them everywhere. Each family is only a type of others just like it. But I would be glad to brighten the life of this woman—she is so good and patient.”





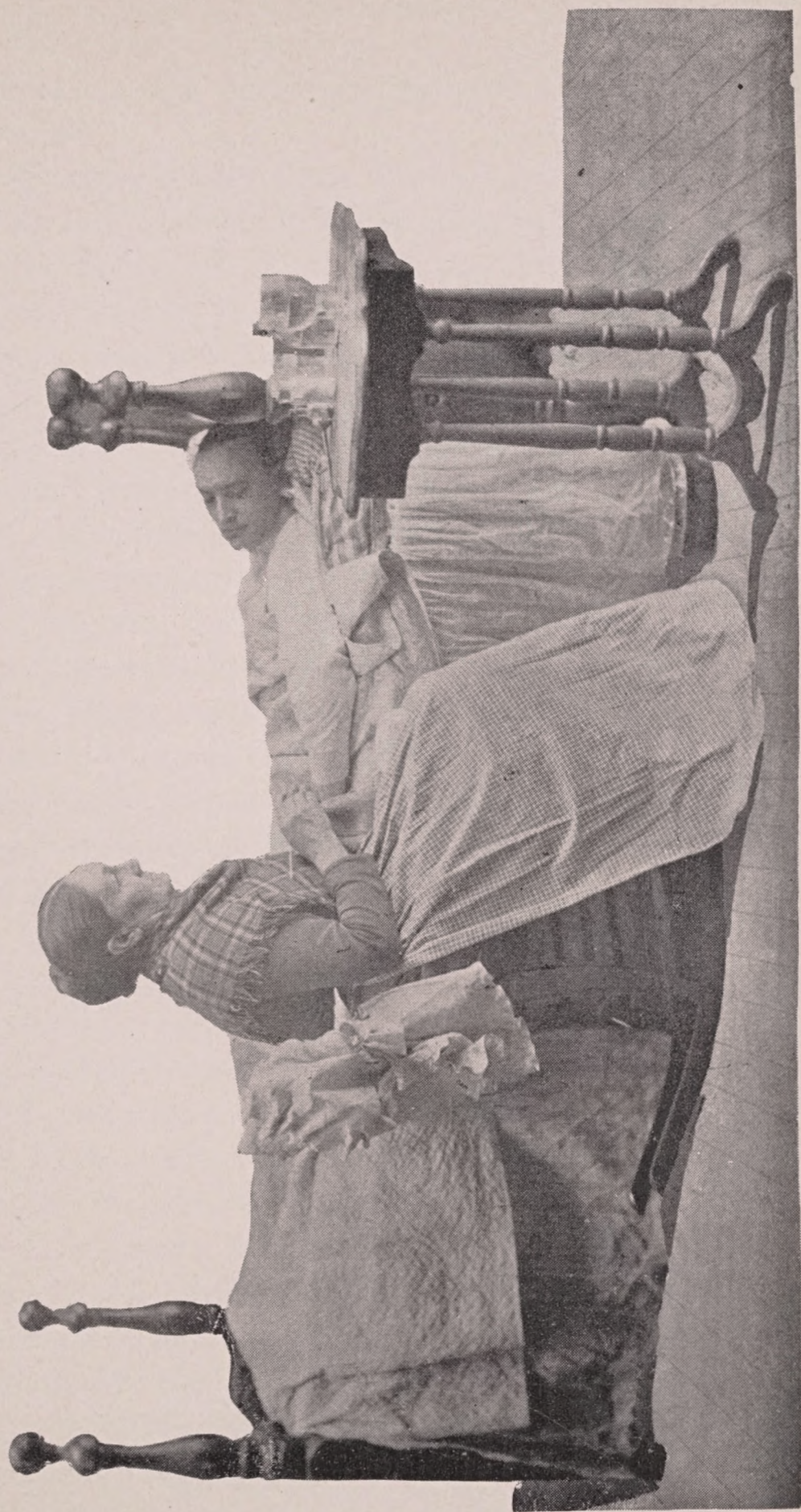
CHAPTER VII.

*“ And what’s her history?
A blank, my lord. She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i’ the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek.”*

MRS. GOOLSON sometimes came with her knitting, and sat by the sick man’s bed. She talked little, but she was a good listener. Her mind had been starved. All of the great, noble, and tender instincts of splendid womanhood were curled up in her soul like fruit buds awaiting their time.

Without reasoning it out, she saw that this stranger, whom chance had sent into her care, was no common tramp. She knew he was lacking in many respects, yet she saw that he had intellect, and he spoke of things that her own mind had dwelt on dimly, and of which she had read in the days of her girlhood. She longed to have knowledge—knowledge of what? She could not tell; she only wanted to know.

When the good woman came with her knitting, and sat down, it was a sign that she wished to hear the man talk. He knew it. Perhaps he was a little



SHE OFTEN BROUGHT HER KNITTING AND SAT BY THE BED.

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feverish; under such conditions the tongue is easily loosened.

“Mother, before I leave here I am going to have a little talk with Mr. Goolson about the girls working in the fields; it is not right. The reduction of physical nature to forms of use is no mean task; but it is a man’s business. Woman’s work is in the home, but best of all, she reduces spirit to forms of use. The greatest and best use of spirit is affection. Woman transmits it. She must absorb and give it out. Motherhood pain often brings out the best in woman’s character.

“‘Ah, yes,’ I hear the critics say, ‘but your idea that maternity brings out affection does not always work. Not one woman in ten is any gentler for the lesson. If she is rich she has a wet-nurse and a day nurse, and turns the child over to its tutor, when it is old enough, while she attends to “social duties” and leads the german, or, “unbonneted,” presides at the coffee urn. Or, on the other hand, she is dull and stupid and revengeful, as of yore intent on pleasure or ease and alert for a good time.’

“And to this I too say: ‘Ah, yes, I know it all,’ for in one sense Nature is a failure. How many of the buds open into flowers? How many of the flowers ripen into fruit? How much of the fruit even fulfils its purpose? Nature fails continually. The rain that falls on the great city flows into the sewers, and is sweeping the real wealth of the nation into the ocean, so that with a pencil and paper I will compute you the time when the owl and the jackal and the hyena will make their dens in the

palaces, and this land will be as desolate as is Canaan, the land once flowing with milk and honey. Your fertile fields are being reduced to stony barrens, and they shall be but hiding-places for the conies. Nature fails.

“Ninety-nine men out of one hundred fail in business. One out of a thousand wins the best love of woman; only one woman out of thousands gives her heart’s jewels to the man who holds them safe. Man is a product of Nature. Nature fails. Yes! ah, yes! I know it well, not one picture out of a million is transferred from brain to canvas—not one thought, immortal, heavenly, that flits through the mind of man is whispered to his friend. How little of my joy I can impart! Nature fails.

“The preacher toils and prays for years, but no one listens,—his words fall like the petals of flowers that blossomed over the prairies of America before the Northmen came. Nature fails.

“The mighty forests rotted here for centuries—the birds sang, and no human ear heard nor soul took up the melody. Nature fails.

“Not one millionth part of the sun’s rays reach planets that maintain life—the rest of his beams die in cold and arid space with nothing to reflect back the heat and light. Nature fails.

“Jesus and Socrates failed. Columbus died in chains, grasping in his stiffened fingers the cross of Christ. Nature worked at the rusting chains to set him free, but death came first. Nature fails.

“We reach out thought after thought, our souls weave filament after filament—we send them swaying

out into the Darkness of the Unknown—a filament catches and is held fast—at last we are in communication with the Infinite. *Nature Wins!*”

“But, Mr. Smith, I do not understand but a little of what you say. I do not know what you mean when you talk of women ‘who preside at the coffee earn or lead the Germans.’ I thought Bismarck was leader of the Germans; and do the German women really have to earn money to buy the coffee?”

“Pardon me, mother; I forgot. I was only talking to myself—I was thinking of the women I know in New York.”

“You have a family there?”

“Yes,—no, that is, I have a son.”

“And the boy’s mother, your wife—is she dead?”

“His mother—yes, she is dead. I adopted the boy, but I love him as if he were my own. It is the one thing that is dragging on me, to think I cannot go to him.”

“Your trouble is a small one—you will get well, you have something to look forward to. *I* have no hope!”

“But your boy is dead, and you told me yesterday, just before the Doctor came, that there are things worse than death!”

“Ah, yes; and I told you truth. I do not grieve over death—it is uncertainty that kills. I do not know what horrible fate is hers—you must never tell. My husband forbade me ever mentioning her name to any living soul. He threatened the girls that he would strip them and whip them with a

horsewhip if they ever spoke of her. No, no, no, I have gone too far—I must not say more. Do not question—forgive me. Talk to me of something—anything; talk to me—‘Nature Wins!’ you said. Yes, go on, I am listening, see. I am calm, go on—talk to me.”

The woman was knitting furiously—big tears ran down her pale cheeks and fell on the stocking. “Go on; see, I am calm—talk to me. Don’t you see I am listening!”

“Cease that work, Mrs. Goolson; give me your hand, look in my face while I speak! I am no vagabond; I am rich, I am powerful. You never knew a man who can do what I can do. I know every corner of the earth; I have influence, I have money. Without hope of reward, you have befriended me. You are in trouble, some secret sorrow is gnawing away your life. You must tell me of it, that I may help you. Tell me, so that I may crush the being that is wronging you. I cannot bring the dead back to life, but, by God, I can kill! Tell me what it is, that I may meet the issue in fair fight!”

“You are my friend, Mr. Smith; I know it—you will soon be well, you can travel from town to town, from city to city, from State to State,—you must find her for me. She was such a frail little thing—only fourteen years old,—but the brightest one of my daughters. But she had a strong will, and she opposed her father, so that he used to beat her. He tried to break her stubborn disposition, but he could not—she ran away; I do not know where she is. You will find her for me, I know you will; you have



“GO ON ! I AM LISTENING !”

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a brave heart, you will find her! you will find her! you will find her! Here—let me show you—I have them locked in that trunk—I will get them, all tied up in a newspaper; see! these dainty brown ringlets—are they not beautiful curls? She must have cut them off herself. She left them with her little girl-clothes, but with no word to say where she was going. She took a suit of my dead boy's garments, and wore her father's boots and hat. It was last November—over six months ago,—and still no word. Ah, me, this uncertainty——

“O heavens! the man is dying! help! quick, Mary Jane—see him clutching at his collar! He cannot breathe—quick, Mary Jane, get some water—oh, what shall we do——”





CHAPTER VIII.

*“ Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one :
Shall we be sundered, sweet girl ? ”*

I N battle, horses that are wounded almost invariably die—the shock loosens life, and it slips away and leaves only food for vultures.

There are men, too, with small grip on vitality, although to the casual eye they may be splendid specimens of manly strength. And then there are others whose spirits seem made of sterner stuff: bullets may strike clear through their heads, enter on one side and come out on the other, and still they stay here many years, with evident intent to see how matters are going to “pan out.” Others still have been known to carry around in their anatomy several grains of cold lead with no other seeming effect than to make them excellent barometers.

Our tramp belonged to the latter class; he had the proverbial nine lives of a cat. The severe contusions that he received in the wreck, and the shock of being buried under tons of coal, to say nothing of very serious injury to his leg, would have killed most men.

Perhaps our good orthodox friends in the days gone by (and about the best we can say of the days that have gone by, is that they have gone by) had a possible basis of logic in their idea that good health was a sign of depravity. Surely, they often mistook biliousness for piety, and we even make the mistake occasionally yet. When our tramp was in good health, you could not have appealed to his finer sensibilities with force sufficient to increase his pulse. Now that he was laid low, his heart went out to others—he was filled with sympathy, pity, and his better self was in possession of the battered clay.

In health, a distressed, overworked farmer's wife only caused him a cynical smile. He knew the barrenness of the average life of women on farms, but what cared he! He quizzed them, harassed them, kept them from their work by asking foolish questions; got them into argument, excited them into anger, or treated them to long abstruse harangues of which they knew nothing.

Now all was changed. He longed to lighten the burden and to bring some stray ray of sunshine into lives that were dark; and, as he lay helpless on that sick-bed, he cursed himself for flinging away the opportunities he had had for doing good.

He had sowed nettles where he might have strewn violets.

In this mood, the distress of Mrs. Goolson struck him hard, and, although he could have withstood this siege to his emotions (we generally are able to stand other people's sorrows), yet the astounding revela-

tion that the one human being in all the wide world that had gotten a hold on his sleeping affections was a little girl, and the hazy thought that he had treated her roughly and left her among strangers in a great city, unnerved him in his weak state.

He revived in a few moments, and found Mrs. Goolson anxiously bending over him, bathing his face. For an hour he lay in a state of partial stupor. The revelation that had come to him floated over him like a dream that had fled.

He could not make it out—he, a man who had met humanity under every conceivable condition, who was never deceived by mortal man or woman, should now be taken captive by a child!

He thought of all the harshness he had visited upon this innocent little girl—his rough words, his oaths, his ordering her to go for whiskey, his laughing at her fears, sneering at her hopes, and mocking her distress. Then he thought of what he might have done for her, with all the money at his command; of how he could have given her over into the charge of some kind motherly woman, who would have bestowed on her the tender care that adolescence needs. He recalled the marble whiteness of her face, the big, open, wondering hazel eyes, the wan dark lines beneath. He remembered the tremors of pain that seemed at times to shoot through the slender form, the craving for peculiar things to eat, the variable appetite, the tendency to faintness that he thought was only starvation—and his knowledge of physiology brought him to the conclusion that the child was suffering from chlorosis, and if her sur-

roundings were not changed she would grow worse instead of better.

His head was not clear enough to decide what was best to do. Her position in that big printing-office was a dangerous one. The disguise would surely come to light—she might need protection, and what if there was no one to give it! Mr. Rodgers was stupid, and stupid people can easily be cruel and unjust. Mr. White was immersed in business cares, and of Miss Griggs he knew little—women are often harsh to their own sex—certainly he did not know whether she was capable of the delicacy that would be needed in this case—to show this child what was best to do, and at the same time not hurt her by blame or censure or a course of treatment that would kill her self-respect.

Hillard did not sleep that night. He made a hundred plans, and then threw them all overboard. He decided he would write to White, then he concluded he would write only to “Jimmy,” then he fell back on Uncle Rodgers, and afterwards concluded to leave it all to Maud Griggs, but soon concluded that Mrs. Griggs would be better.

When the first rays of the sun came streaming in, a little after five o'clock in the morning, he had fully perfected his plans: he would write to nobody.

This was the decision:

“I am sick, but I will be well in a month. I will send for money, and go straight to New York. I will take a carriage for the *Commercial* office direct from the ferry-house. I will go down in the basement and greet my Jimmy, just as if nothing had happened;

she will be there, making out bills. Then, when I see that she is all right, I will go to Mrs. Griggs and give her two hundred dollars. I will tell her the exact circumstances, and have her buy a complete outfit for a young girl who is just budding out into womanhood. She shall have the finest of silk underwear and the daintiest of linen, and her dresses shall be tailor-made, plain, and neat. Her hat and gloves must match, and the jacket—well, I'll let her make the selection herself. I will leave the whole matter to Mrs. Griggs, for she is a mother, she is tender and gentle. Of course Jimmy must not go back to the *Commercial* office after she gets her new clothes! I will just wait a week, until she gets used to things, and then I will go around and see her and I will treat it all just as a matter of course.

“Then we will all have dinner together, and afterwards discuss what is best to do. Mrs. Griggs and Maud will have their say, and Jimmy will suggest, but I will decide the thing. She shall go to some private school—a boarding-school, where there are only a few scholars and the woman in charge is a lady in very fact. Jimmy shall stay there two years, then she shall go to Vassar, and after that I will take her to Europe to complete her musical education. Nothing is too good for my daughter. She is a queen—a very queen!”





CHAPTER IX.

*"There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out."*

AS soon as the household was astir Hillard called Mrs. Goolson to him. Taking her hand he said: "Hold your head down close, mother, I want to tell you,—your daughter is safe! I know where she is. As soon as I am well enough to travel, I will go direct to her, and will write you all about her."

"Do you know *now* where she is?"

"Yes!"

"And she is safe?"

"Yes!"

"With people who will care for her?"

"Certainly; but not so loud. Do not ask me more now,—I am—someway, I am not quite right,—it's my head,—it will soon be better though!"

The trembling woman managed to go about her work. She brought in wood and made the fire in the kitchen stove. The girls went to feed the stock. Sally and little Mary Jane "slopped" the pigs and milked the cows, while "Sis" cleaned out the stable and curried the horses.

Mr. Goolson got up in time for breakfast.

Hillard could locate each member of the family at any hour of the day—he had nothing else to do.

He heard the crackling of the fire in the kitchen stove, and soon came the familiar sound of potatoes being washed in a tin pail by simply pouring water upon them and stirring them with a broom handle. He knew when these potatoes were put in the pot, and he knew when the pot boiled. He was aware of exactly what the family had for breakfast, although he could not see out into the kitchen. He could tell “side meat” from ham; sausage from shoulder; salt-rising from yeast-made bread, and buckwheat from plain batter “slapjacks”—all by the smell. He knew whether the coffee was warmed over or made fresh,—whether it was all “store coffee” or half rye, bran, or parched corn; sassafras tea from sage, and dock greens from dandelion or cowslip. He knew when the girls came with the milk, and whether it was Sis or Sally, for Sally always used the scraper that was made out of an old plowshare nailed to the kitchen step,—it gave off a musical, metallic sort of ring. He knew whether Mr. Goolson was in fairly good humor or not by the use he made of this scraper; beside that, when Goolson was cross he spat and blew his nose vigorously just before entering the house, unless he happened to come in stealthily to see what kind of evil business the girls were engaged in; and even then Hillard always heard his tread.

It is strange how alert the senses of invalids often are! Hillard counted the cracks in the ceiling, and knew exactly each line in the cheap, fantastic wall-

paper. He made imaginary drawings on the wall and took an intense interest in a grand-daddy-long-legs that had a nest behind the clock. Then there was a villainous spider that lived in the stove-pipe hole. This spider would come out and look at the sick man every morning and wish he was dead. Hillard called him the Undertaker. He would not let Mrs. Goolson molest these spiders, but he used to swear that the first thing he would do when he could stand on the floor would be to get the broom or mop and kill the Undertaker.

Hillard had no appetite for breakfast that morning, after the sleepless night.

The Doctor came.

He looked into the patient's eyes, he took his temperature, he felt his pulse. Then he did it all over again, only counting the pulse with watch in hand. Then this little Doctor examined the foot of the injured leg, then he stood at the window, looked out, and whistled a bar from *Annie Rooney*.

Going into the kitchen, he motioned for Mrs. Goolson to follow him outdoors.

"Look here, Mrs. Goolson, has your husband been in to see that man again?"

"No, I am sure he has not."

"Certain that Mr. Goolson has not been bothering him?"

"Yes, I am certain."

"Any letters or telegrams come for him?"

"No."

"Strange—I was three years at Rush and one at Bellevue,—I never saw so quick a change. He was

doing well yesterday—to-day his pulse is 100, temperature 105°, and the circulation in his foot has ceased."

"Doctor, you do not think he is going to die?"

"Die! Never! But he will have to buy a cork leg, that's all. I will get old Doctor Tomkins to administer the chloroform."

"You mean you will have to cut his leg off?"

"That is about the size of it. Will you break the news to him, or shall I?"

"Oh, Doctor, I never could!"

"Well, I would rather do the work than tell him of it, but here goes."

The Doctor walked slowly into the room and seated himself at the bedside.

"Well, Doc., you do not know where to begin, do you?" spoke the tramp.

"Begin what?"

"To tell me that the leg must come off."

"Ah, you know already—you have studied surgery, I see; but it is the only thing to do."

"Yes, I have studied medicine, and I heard all you said to Mrs. Goolson. I heard her follow you out of the door, and the wind just blew your words right to me. About that cork leg, Doc.; are there any corns on a cork foot?"

"No, nor ingrowing toe-nails neither."

"Well, get old Dr. Tomkins and your saw and scalpel as soon as possible—let us have it over with,—I can stand anything but suspense."

"Well, if you have n't got grit! I was three years at——"

“Hold on there! you informed me of that once; go and get old Dr. Tomkins, with his funnel and sponge. We ’ll bury it in the cemetery and erect a monument with an inscription, ‘Sacred to the memory of John Smith’s left leg,’ and then a choice little verse of poetry headed ‘Gone Before.’ You ask Goolson to write it, please; two o’clock, you say?”

“Yes, at two o’clock.”





CHAPTER X.

“ Rest, rest, perturbed spirit.”

AFTER the amputation the patient lay for several days in a partial stupor. The anæsthetic seemed to have sickened him, but Dr. Parker was hopeful.

Mrs. Goolson slept on the floor by the bedside those first few nights, and she heard the man calling for “Jimmy.” “Come, boy, you played me a great joke. Forgive me for treating you so roughly. I will write my book now ; you will be my amanuensis—ha, ha ! my crutch, Jimmy, my crutch—you will not forsake me, Jimmy—you will not forsake me, will you ? ”

And so the man tossed his arms, and rolled his head from side to side, and muttered to himself in his delirium. Gradually he grew better, but he was very weak those first slow, dragging days.

“ I must get well, I must get well ! ” he exclaimed to the Doctor.

“ But, man, your anxiety on the subject only retards your progress ; if you can only be patient and abandon yourself to Nature, she will care for you, but you cannot lift yourself by your bootstraps ! ”

“ I know, Doctor ; I do not care for myself—I am not afraid of death,—but I have a work to do. I must

get back to New York. The most important business of my life must be attended to!"

"Well, in a month you can go."

Mrs. Goolson sought many times to have the man tell her more about the runaway girl. All the satisfaction she could get was that he had seen her, and that she was employed, earning her own living, and was safe.

He might have told her the actual truth, but perhaps he thought that if he would do so, the frantic mother might make an attempt to go to the child, or she would tell Mr. Goolson, who would endeavor to bring her back.

He only wanted to get back to New York to care for the girl. Then he proposed to make overtures for her legal adoption. After this (and not until then) the family should know all about her welfare, and money would be sent to Mrs. Goolson, so she could go on to New York City and visit her child.

Hillard was a man of decision, when he wanted to be, and his plans on this subject were all made up. In fact, he thought of nothing else, he dreamed of nothing else.

"She is my daughter—my spiritual—I love her; I love no one else. She is loved by none other, save her mother (who is powerless to help her). I am the one to superintend her education. I am a cripple for life, but she will care for me—she will wait on me, do my errands, hand me my crutches, look after my little wants. To be a cripple and be cared for by one who loves you—ah! there is no happier fate. She will delight in assisting me: this is

woman's nature—helpfulness. I have money ; we will travel—go to Europe. We will stop only at the best hotels. I cannot walk, but I have money to hire carriages and to get the service I need. Eight thousand a year—yes, twenty-five dollars a day ; it is enough, and this does not touch the principal either. I never appreciated the value of money before. It is a ticket of admittance to every gallery of art, transportation to any clime ; it can take from its shelf any book in existence ; it gives choice of beautiful raiment, and invites to the best of material comforts. ‘John Hillard and Daughter’ ; yes, that is the way it will look on the hotel registers. And the papers in England will speak of ‘The Hon. John Hillard and his accomplished daughter,’ or ‘the beautiful Miss Hillard of America.’ We will study and read together. I will be her tutor. I will brush up my Greek and Latin just for her, and evenings she will read poetry to me. We will translate Dante,—no one can work alone—we need the help of a sympathetic soul. But how the days do drag—this waiting ; yet I am gaining ; but this waiting—this waiting !”

Pain he could bear, privation was naught, fire and storm did ne'er appal ; he feared not wrath of gods or men, but, alas, he could not wait ! Do you know what it is to wait ? Long, sleepless, feverish nights, when the clock ticks off the dragging seconds and the sound echoes through the silent rooms ! Sickly, friendless, tedious, empty days that drop one by one their eternal sameness into the monotonous past,—slow, weary, dreary waiting, waiting, waiting !



CHAPTER XI.

*"Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the mountain tops."*

STILL the days dragged past.

"To-morrow you may go and sit on the porch," said the Doctor.

It had been three weeks since the amputation and five since the accident. The first sight of the green fields with the waving corn, the cattle in the pastures, the gentle breath of June, all came to the man as a glimpse of a new world. He had been dead, and was now raised to life again—the past was only a dim mass of hazy, indistinct, sensations and forms. Had he seen these beautiful things before? It could not be. Sitting propped up in the big arm-chair, he closed his eyes and tried to think it out. Weariness soon came over him, and he asked to be helped back into bed.

But the effort of dressing, the thought that he had really sat up and seen the earth again, the smell of the corn and the sight of sunshine and shadow playing across the fields did him good.

His sleep that night for the first time was peaceful and childlike. How long he had slept he did not

know—perhaps three hours. The room was filled with light—not daylight, but a pink, luminous glow. The man had grown to distrust his senses,—pain brings strange hallucinations. He lay with half-closed eyes and enjoyed this beautiful light that gave its charming tint to every object in the room. The “Undertaker” came out of his house and slid down a long rope as if to inspect the phenomenon, then hastily scrambled back.

“It cannot be sunrise—no ; I’m only in a dream. But, there ! what was that noise ?—it sounds like a crackling !”

The man raised himself on one elbow and looked out of the window in the direction of the barn—it was on fire.

It only took an instant to give the alarm to the sleeping household. They rushed out in their night clothes but nothing could be done—the structure was doomed. Luckily the cattle were all out in the pasture but there were two horses in the stalls—they had probably been suffocated by smoke before the fire was discovered. The wind was blowing the sparks and cinders over the house in showers. Hillard, left alone, was vainly endeavoring to formulate a plan by which he could get out, if the house caught. He had no crutches—no cane ; he had seen boys walk on one leg by supporting themselves on chair backs—could he do this ?

Mrs. Goolson came in. “The house may burn too—I will save nothing until you are safe. Here—I will tie a knot in each corner of the blanket you are lying on—I will take hold of one knot and each



THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH LIGHT.

See page 202.

of the girls will hold a corner and we can carry you out to the road."

Just then the roof of the burning building fell with a crash and a great cloud of smoke and fire stretched off to the north of the house; fortunately the wind had veered but a few moments before, and the house was safe.

The walls fell—the fierceness of the flames had spent themselves; only a black heap of smouldering ruins remained that now and then broke forth into a fitful flame that shone out against the blackness of the sky. It was three o'clock in the morning, but there was no sleep for the Goolsons.

The mother and daughters huddled in a corner of the kitchen; Mr. Goolson sat with his head buried in his hands—no one spoke.

The girls were stupefied—they were used to trouble, and although the "barn" was more properly a stable, being mostly made from poles and straw, yet the extent of this disaster they could not fathom. The mother, uncertain of her husband's temper, dared not break the silence.

So they sat—sat and waited for daylight.

A faint glow of pink was seen in the east. The cows came up in single file through the dripping dew and "moohed" for the calves that were tied along the fence by the roadside. Goolson arose, the picture of despair, and went out and looked at the black heap that only yesterday was his barn. Then he returned and stood in the doorway of the house. He glared at the women, then he spoke in deep hoarse guttural——

“It is that tramp—one of his accursed crew has done this thing—he is a Jonah—I knew he would bring a curse upon us. I begged you not to harbor him—yet you persisted in spite of my advice. Now see what you have brought me to—you Mary Goolson—you have put the children up to oppose me. A curse upon you, a curse upon your beastly vagabond! A curse upon your girls! A curse upon you all!”

Sally had hastily shut the door that led from the kitchen to the sitting-room and then the women all crouched in a corner speechless. They made no defence.

Humanity is ever prone to charge others with its misfortunes and take all credit to itself.

Certain conditions of the body breed bacteria. Certain conditions of spirit develop wrong impulses. These passions prowl and growl and curse and mutter and bellow in the sub-cellar of the souls of some men. A certain logic, very supple, very nimble, and yet very implacable, is at the disposal of little minds. They charge others with all of their troubles; the one nearest has to take the onus.

“Why did you beat this woman?” asked the judge, of a brute. “I had no one else to beat,” was the surly reply.

Goolson went across the fields to relate the news of his disaster to the neighbors. Straw stacks and slough grass are often purposely set on fire in this part of the country, so the sight of a blaze causes no comment among the farmers.

It was daylight, but these poor farmer-folk wo-

men were too deeply immersed in gloom to think of getting breakfast.

“Hi, there! you folks in the kitchen—are you going to let a fellow starve?” called Smith, cheerily. “Bustle around now and get me a cup of tea and a bit of toast, so I can go out and take my constitutional!”

After a little time the tea was brought.

They all stood around and watched the man eat; these poor stricken souls had nothing else to do. They had no plans for deliverance—no hopes. They were so very poor before the barn burned that now there was nothing else to do but go to the almshouse or die. No horses, no wagon, no harness, no hay.

“It’s just as well the hay is burned,” moaned little Mary Jane, “for the pitchfork is gone—only the tines left.”

The tramp laughed—he joked, he pretended to cry, he asked about the insurance. There was none.

“I am glad,” said the tramp. “Give me ’nother cup of that tea while you are resting, Sis. I am a king—four women to wait on me—fan me, Sally, what are you standing around for? I’ll discharge you. Say, mother, get a pen and ink and write what I tell you. But hold on—you, Mary Jane, go catch Blixon—that three-year-old colt—you can ride him, can’t you? I thought so, astride—well, that’s all right, all the women ride so in South America—they will here yet. Now catch Blixon and take a telegram for me to Ladoga. Get the colt and we will

have the telegram all ready when you come back.
Now, mother, write :

“ LADOGA, IND., June 19, 1886.

“ To Henry Clews & Co.,
“ New York City.

“ Beeswax one fusion felix.

“ JOHN HILLARD.”

“ There is no sense in it and it is not your name signed to it anyway,” said Mrs. Goolson, reading the message over.

“ I know that, but we will send it just the same.”

The telegram was pinned to the front of the girl's dress, and she mounted the horse—bareback. A sucker from an apple tree was cut for a whip, and away she rode on a stiff gallop for the town five miles away.

In just two hours she came back. The mother stood watching for her—the telegram was yet pinned to the little pink dress and the child was crying.

“ The railroad man said it was cipher despatch and a cipher is no good. He would n't send it, 'cause it was n't paid for first—he would n't.”

“ I might have known it,” muttered the tramp. Mrs. Goolson thought he said something that sounded like a swear word—she was not certain.

"How much did he say he wanted, Mary Jane?" asked Smith, who was now partially dressed and seated at the window.

"Eighty cents—it's an awful lot of money and our barn is burned!"

The tramp had just thirty cents, Mrs. Goolson twenty, Sis fifteen. Mary Jane came in and by dint of much shaking managed to get fifteen coppers out of her bank. The money was tied in a handkerchief and pinned alongside of the message. The colt was tired by this time and another apple sprout was cut. The child mounted with the help of a boost from Sally. The colt and rider had reached the road and the horse's head was turned toward town when an angry yell was heard coming from behind the house. It was Mr. Goolson's voice.

"Come back here—where are you going with that colt without my permission,—I'll show you. Bring that whip to me this instant and I'll wear it out on your back!"

The child stopped and seemed about to return.

"Go on, go on, go on!" shouted Smith, from the window. "Go on, go on, go on!" echoed Sally, Sis, and the mother as they stood on the stoop and emphasized the order with a wave of their aprons.

The apple sprout was applied vigorously and the horse struck into a keen run. The little rider leaned forward over the colt's neck as they crossed the bridge with a clatter and disappeared over the knoll in a cloud of dust.



CHAPTER XII.

"A messenger waits without!"

IN two hours the patter of hoof-beats was heard; the watchers were delighted to see that the telegram was no longer pinned to the pink dress. What was the import of that telegram the women could not guess. Neither did they seek to know—a telegram is such a mysterious thing. The Goolsons had received one once—years before—it told of death. To receive a telegram would be a calamity, to send one was something to be proud of.

"'Beeswax one fusion felix,'" said Mrs. Goolson to Sally as they washed the dishes. "I hope Henry will not be awfully shocked when he gets it. I declare, if another telegram ever comes here I do not believe I could open it. 'Fusion felix'—well, I always heard that York State folks talked funny. I suppose Mr. Smith only wants his friends to know where he is. 'Beeswax one fusion felix!'"

Mr. Goolson had gone to the woods with one of the neighbors to cut poles for a stable when the girl returned. Fortunately, when he got back the Doctor was there.

“Smith” feared that Mr. Goolson would punish Mary Jane for going away without permission; so, when Mr. Goolson entered the kitchen the Doctor was sent out on some pretext, and then called to in a loud voice:

“I say, Doc.—tell your mother to hold on to that feather-bed,—and the tar—is it good and sticky?”

Mr. Goolson forgot to whip little Mary Jane. No doubt she deserved it, but she escaped with only a scowl or two.





CHAPTER XIII.

"Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind."

EARLY the following morning Goolson was much surprised to see the station agent from Ladoga drive up in a hurry.

"I want to see your boarder—the man that got hurt."

"Have n't any boarder," growled Goolson.

"Why, yes you have—your girl brought over a telegram from him to be sent to New York."

"Not with my permission."

"Well, she brought it. I want to see the man."

"'Spose you find him then."

"Aint he here?"

"I told you once."

"But the tramp you are taking care of—the man that was hurt in the wreck!"

"Oh, he's in the house, I 'spose, if he has n't robbed us and run away. What name?"

"Hillard."

"Hillard? why, he told me his name was Smith—of course, though, these scoundrels assume any name. What do you want of him?"

"Oh, nothing much. I have a thousand dollars for him, that's all; came by express."

Goolson's jaw dropped ; he stared ; then he took off his hat and scratched his head.

"What did you say you had for Mr. Smith?"

"A thousand-dollar express package."

"Let me see it?"

"That is not necessary—where is the man?"

Goolson led the way into the sick man's room, took off his hat, and said: "Good-morning, Mr. Smith. This is our railroad agent; he has something for you."

"I have a package for John Hillard," said the agent.

"That is my name."

"But Mr. Goolson says your name is Smith!"

"My name is Hillard."

"But under the circumstances you will not object to my wiring for instructions. The package is valuable, and I do not know you."

"Certainly—wire for instructions."

The agent went away without leaving the money, but came back in the afternoon bringing the plump package, with its tape and seals all intact. The bulky envelope was lightened to the extent of a crisp five dollar bill which was given to the agent for his trouble.

"That is no tramp," said the agent to Mr. Goolson as he passed out of the kitchen door. "He is a perfect gentleman."

Mr. Goolson was fairly good-natured at supper time. A touch of optimism could be detected in his manner. He did not complain of the cooking. The biscuits were soggy, but he never mentioned it; the

coffee was muddy, but he made no comment. He discussed the tramp question at length. The door was closed so the sick man could not hear the conversation.

"He will surely pay us for taking care of him!" said he to his wife.

"I suppose so, but we will set no price—we should be glad to help the helpless."

"Yes but we are so poor—he is rich—think of it! A thousand dollars! But where did it come from? Do you think he stole it?"

"No, he is honest I believe. Some rich friend sent it to him."

"If he offers to pay you just refer him to me—tell him I handle all the money. I'll not let him off under two dollars a day for all the time he has been here. A dollar a day for board and a dollar a day for nursing."

"But, father," interposed Sally, "that will be over a hundred dollars, and what if he borrowed the money and needs it for some special purpose—to buy a farm or something."

"No difference, he shall not get away without paying the last dollar. It was lucky I found out what was in that package—I'm sure he never would have told us."

A voice was heard calling from the other room.

"See what the rogue wants," growled Goolson to Mary Jane.

"He wants you," replied the little girl as she came back.

"Oh, he wants me, does he; well I want to see

him too. A hundred and fifty dollars—yes, a hundred and fifty—not a cent less,” chuckled Goolson in a voice that was a mixture of laugh and threat.

“You have met with quite a loss,” spoke Hil-lard, as the man stood in the doorway. “You have met with quite a loss, and you had no insurance?”

“No, the men who run the insurance companies are rascals anyway. Yes, it is a sad loss—the two horses—the hay and all the tools—all gone. It will take me years, yes, years, to make it good.”

“Well, how much was the loss?”

“Six hundred dollars at least.”

“Well, here is seven hundred ; it will put you on your feet.”

The farmer was staggered. He was used to haggling for every cent which he received. He pulled at his whiskers, cleared his throat, and managed to ask, “What was that you said? I did not understand.”

“I said that I want to give you this seven hundred dollars—you have been very kind to me. I should have died had not your wife given me such good care. You have had hard luck and I wish to make good your loss. Here—my arm is getting tired ; why don’t you take the money?”

The man did not take the roll of bills. He called for his wife and the girls.

They entered.

“See there,” said the farmer, “Mr. Smith offers to give me seven hundred dollars to make good the loss by fire. And this when I accused him of setting fire to the barn! Listen. That fire was my fault. I left a lantern hanging in the barn, and one of the

horses got loose and must have kicked it down, and then I dared not confess my fault. I blamed it on others—I have sinned and wronged you all—I have wronged this stranger. Merciful God, forgive—forgive!!”

Let us say in passing that Goolson was not wholly bad. Men are what they are largely (if not entirely) through the conditions that have hedged them around. Toil, hardship, ignorance, disappointment, and bad cooking, coupled with his religious training, had in youth dwarfed the good in him. He was a victim of both physical and moral dyspepsia. In his religion there was a god of wrath, and a very warm temperature for people who did not believe as he did. In families where these things are taught, the beefsteak is always fried (never broiled), the eggs are invariably cooked hard, the tea is a fine decoction for tanning leather, the coffee coats the tongue and blears the eyes, the biscuits weigh a pound a piece and are eaten three times a day, red hot; and they have pie for breakfast, pie for lunch, pie for dinner, pie for supper, and pie 'atween meals.

Farmers with this sort of cuisine and the harsh beliefs eat little fruit; they prefer to sell it. They dispose of the best that they produce and eat the worst.

Whether a bad theology is caused by bad cooking or *vice versa* I cannot say; and whether the entire stud of theological nightmares originally arose from impaired digestion is beyond my ken.

Let Herbert Spencer tell.

All the moral we have room for here is this: Man's

actions spring largely from his physical condition. It is equally true that his physical condition comes from his mental attitude, for mind is king. But the saint cannot long remain a saint (on earth) where the cook does not know his business; and he who does not think well of God cannot of men.





CHAPTER XIV.

“What’s gone and what’s past help, should be past grief.”

NEVERTHELESS Mr. Goolson took the seven hundred dollars with many profuse and awkward thanks and deep humiliation for his former shortcomings. As for the women, they, never having been present at such a scene before, simply fell on each other’s necks and cried. Then they ceased their tears and laughed. Hillard looked on for fully ten minutes enjoying the panorama.

When the hysteria had partially subsided little Mary Jane remarked: “Why don’t you say something, Mr. Smith?”

It was time. His silence was making things uncomfortable. A few words rightly spoken are often a lubricated inclined plane that let visitors down and out without loss of dignity; or right words make people feel at home.

“Sit down, now, all of you,” said Hillard, hitching himself up to a sitting posture in bed. “Sit down, and I will tell you my plans. Now, you see, my friends, I am what you would call rich. I only turned tramp because I was in search of novelty, but the novelty of having one leg satisfies me and I

am done. I have plenty of money in New York and will start for there next week. I am going to give the Doctor \$200—I gave the railroad agent \$5—so I will then have \$95 left. My fare to New York will be only \$22—sleeper \$5. Now, here, Mrs. Goolson, is \$60; I want you to go to town to-morrow and buy me a ready-made suit, and clothing to the extent of \$25, then you keep the rest of the money for yourself and the girls.”

The girls had never had any money of their own, and this generosity started another fit of weeping which was duly followed by the smiles.

The next morning, for the first time, Hillard breakfasted with the family. Mr. Goolson helped him to dress and assisted him to the table, which was set out-of-doors on the north side of the house. No one had a desire to rush through the meal as usual. The bees hummed and collected around the pump, the breeze scarcely stirred the tops of the locust trees, the dew glistened on the corn tassels, and from the field of clover across the road was wafted the most delicate of perfumes. All talked and talked at one time, and the clatter of knives and forks chimed with the drumming of a woodpecker on the tall poplar overhead.

“Well, I swan, if there aint Dr. Parker!” exclaimed Sally.

“He must have been up to Blackman’s—you know he has been expecting to be called there for a week,” said Mr. Goolson.

“She must have had an easy time—the Doctor looks so smiling,” mused the good mother.

The Doctor's sorrel turned in through the open bars, on an easy canter. Sure enough, St. Luke was not only smiling, but he was on a broad grin. He rode his horse right up to the table and tickled Mary Jane's ears with the switch he carried in his hand.

"If this aint the jolliest family party I have seen for months. I was two years at Rush and one at Bellevue, but I never was more surprised in my life than when I came over the knoll and heard you all chattering away. The air is so still—one could hear you a mile. What are you all laughing at? Yes, don't care if I do; I 'll just tie my horse under the apple tree."

A place was quickly made for the Doctor at the table. He drank two cups of coffee; refused sugar, but asked Sally to look in the cup instead; told several stories that all had previously heard, but they laughed over them as they never did before. Then the yarns were matched by several from Hillard.

"Great Scott!" my horse is gnawing that apple tree," exclaimed the Doctor, as he jumped up.

"Who cares, let him gnaw!" shouted Goolson, good-naturedly.

The Doctor turned, surprised. His face grew suddenly serious. "Tell me," he asked, "am I in a dream, am I drunk, or is this the Goolson family?"

"We are the Goolsons," spoke the little girl, "and Mr. Smith is the bestest man that ever lived—he is no tramp, why——"

"It was me who set the barn afire—accidentally, but I was too much of a coward to confess it,"

blurted out Mr. Goolson. "I was a brute to speak ill of Smith—I——"

"Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus, while we petty men do walk under his huge legs and peep about to find ourselves dishonorable grass," etc. Hillard was roaring that impassioned speech of Cassius above the din in a voice that drowned all others, and the lines were being delivered straight at Mr. Goolson's head in a way that caused that worthy gentleman to shudder.

"I say, Doc.," he added, suddenly, very perceptibly lowering his tone, "when can I start for New York?"

"Oh, a week from to-day—you are all right."

"Next Wednesday, then?"

"Yes."

"And I am going to the timber at once to get some straight pieces of hickory to make Mr. Smith a pair of crutches," said Mr. Goolson, who had now gotten his breath and was hoping to escape before another dose of Shakespeare was fired at him.

"And Sally and I are going to town to get him clothes," spoke the woman.

"And some day he is coming back to see us—I hope it will be soon," echoed Mary Jane.

The Doctor looked across at the clover field absent-mindedly as he said, half to himself:

"Take humanity as they run, they are a mighty queer lot."



CHAPTER XV.

*“When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.”*

WEDNESDAY forenoon came. A clear, cloudless sky. The killdeers called and a “bob-white” stood on a post down by the pig-pen and whistled loudly for his mate. Buzzards sailed back and forth away up in the blue ether. All was peace, quiet, rest.

“I ’m going away just as I begin to like the place,” thought Hillard, as he sat on the back porch watching Sally and Mary Jane as they hitched the horses to the new red wagon.

The Doctor came in his gig at ten o’clock and the minister, too, drove over with his wife just for a ride and to say good-by to Mr. Goolson’s guest, they explained.

Two forkfuls of hay were thrown into the wagon-box; the back door was locked and the key placed under the door mat. The three girls climbed in over the tail-board and sat in the hay, while Mr. and Mrs. Goolson each had a kitchen chair. Hillard

rode with the Doctor in his gig. The preacher and his good wife in the Cincinnati buggy led the way. Next came the Goolsons's fast express, and the Doctor's gig brought up the rear.

"I never saw so many thrushes in the hedgerows," said the Doctor, "and the quail are more plentiful than for years; there was not too much snow for 'em last year. Just see how they come out in the road to pick up the corn and then run on ahead of us."

Rabbits ran across the road from time to time and disappeared in the weeds. The procession came to a party of farmers who were working out their road-tax on the highway. The man who held the handles of the scraper stopped and swung his sombrero over his head in merry greeting. The preacher stopped the Cincinnati buggy, that stopped the red wagon, that stopped the Doctor's gig. Hillard had seen most of these road workers before, and they came forward and shook his hand, wished him luck, and gave him good advice, thus:

"Take keer yerself, ole man."

They neared the village.

Bare-legged youngsters who were playing in the road piling up dust disappeared around the corner of the houses like the rabbits that lost themselves in the weeds. But with the disappearance of the urchins around the house came the pushing aside of cheap lace curtains and curious faces peered forth. Women stood at the back-doors, with babies pulling on their skirts, and waved dishcloths or what not at the gig and the red wagon and the Cincinnati buggy,

and all the while Hillard chatted with the Doctor and made plans as to what they would do when the Doctor came to New York, which both knew might never be.

Then they came to the depot and the agent forgot to be gruff and surly, but came out with much grace and his cap with the gilt band, and insisted on helping Hillard out of the gig. His voice, which was usually three-cornered and would have given any other man a sore throat to use it, was now mild and deferential. He had never seen Hillard except at the one time when he delivered him the thousand-dollar package; yet this circumstance had been rehearsed so often to the village "setters," and told so many times to various persons that the worthy agent almost believed that he himself had supplied the money, as well as delivered the package. He greeted the lame man as a long-lost brother and affectionately called him John.

Two ragged boys stood near, each holding a crutch that had been passed over to them by the Doctor. Several store-keepers in shirt sleeves came over the way and Hillard saluted them and talked shop as he took a chew of tobacco and passed them the fine-cut.

The Goolson team was tied under the church shed a block away, and all came over to the station. The preacher and his wife did likewise. There was much good-natured talk, a little stiff and a trifle feverish at first, perhaps, for taking a train is quite an event to country people, and the going away of their guest pulled hard at the heart-strings of all the Goolsons.

Even the masculine member explained to the preacher that the man with one leg was "a fairly decent sort of chap."

The train was late. Hillard and the agent killed time by pitching horseshoes in the cinders that filled the space between the main track and the switch. One of the coatless store keepers, who wore calico sleeve-protectors, cuffs woven out of straw, and used his ears as racks for pencils, challenged the preacher to take a hand in the game.

Hillard resigned his horseshoe-throwing to Mr. Goolson, who explained his awkwardness by telling that he had not played the game for twenty-five years.

"Then it is time you took it up," replied Hillard.

The ladies laughed. They looked on at the sport and listened with smiles to Hillard's continual banter. The ex-tramp had the agent change a dollar for him into nickels, which he threw out into the cinders for the ragged boys to struggle for. New urchins appeared on the scene, coming out of corn-cribs or grain cars, or from under the platform. Each boy wore three garments: a hat, a shirt, and trousers. The new boys, too, took a hand, without invitation, in the struggle for wealth, until some one announced the whistle of the train at the crossing a mile away. Good-bys were hastily said, hands were wrung and hurried appeals to "come back and see us" were given. The ragged and now dirt-be-grimed urchins stood in respectful silence until the Doctor suggested three cheers for John Hillard. The cheers were given with a will, and a tiger added.

The agent had wired a request that a seat be re-

served in the chair car for an eminent New York banker—adding the information that the banker aforesaid was a particular friend of his. So, as the train came to a stop, the colored porter and a brakeman were on hand to do the honors for the eminent gentleman.

As Hillard hobbled in the car door he looked back, but he saw only one face in all the throng on that platform. That face was deathly white; and Mrs. Goolson's eyes met his in an appealing glance. They understood. The traveller was going to her child and he would give that child the love, the care, the tenderness that had been denied at home. Hillard's look said to the trembling woman in the faded black, "I will do it."





BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

"A man, I am, crossed with adversity."

AT noon on the second day after leaving Lagoda, Hillard arrived at New York City.

Two nights on a sleeping-car, to a man so recently out of a sick-bed, means shaken nerves. He was dizzy with headache, his hands were dry and hot, then cold.

"Thank heaven, I can never talk of having cold feet again," he mused, as he looked down at the swinging, empty leg of the trousers, "and yet that absent foot seems to pain me frightfully."

Several times he had counted his money. There was one dollar and seventy-five cents left. He had been liberal with the brakemen and porters. And the train boy "or peanuts," as Hillard called him, had nearly sold out his stock at the one-legged man's expense—all for the benefit of the babies on the train.

"One dollar and seventy-five cents," said the man. "Well, it's over a dollar more than I had the last time I came in to New York. I'll just take a cab

straight to my rooms in West Twenty-third Street. I bounced my valet when I went away before, but the janitor will have everything in order. I am sick, that is sure—how my hand shakes—a cab? Yes, I 'll take a cab. I want to go to West Twenty-third Street, just off Broadway. A dollar, and in advance? Well, that 's all right, but you need not be so crabbed about it. I am no beggar!"

Hillard's ready-made suit was ill fitting. The sleeves were too long and he had turned them up, and the slouch hat, and pale unshaven face, together with the clumsy crutches, combined with the dust and dirt of travel stain, all made the hackman's mistake that Hillard was a beggar, a natural one. In fact, if he had leaned on his crutches, hat in hand, as the people passed out of the depot, the sight of his wan face might have touched the hearts and purse-strings of even that hurrying city throng.

The lame man crawled inside the cab, the door shut with a slam, the driver climbed to his place, cracked his whip, and away they went rattling over the stones. The jar, jolt, sudden stops, and starts increased the headache, and after what seemed a long ride, Hillard was let down in front of the familiar brownstone front. Painfully he mounted the steps and rang the janitor's bell.

"Who do you want to see?"

"Hillard, you say—Oh, he 's not here now—I do not know where he is. What 's that!—Merciful heavens, you are not Mr. Hillard? Why, yes, I beg a thousand pardons—I did not know you—you have changed so ; that is to say—come in, come in——"

The good old janitor who had so long done the bid-

ding of the princely John Hillard, was wellnigh overcome. He tried not to see the crutches or the cheap, ill-fitting clothes, and he endeavored to apologize for not knowing his old-time benefactor.

“Your rooms? Why we did not expect you back, you see, they said you had gone for good. You of course know the rooms are rented to another tenant. Your attorney it was—came and moved all of your furniture away. But I ’m very glad you are back. There is another suite on the next floor above that, I know it will please you. You are not very well, let me help you down into my room in the basement—my wife will get you something to eat.”

Hillard was helpless as a child, and allowed himself to be led down into the janitor’s rooms. The old man called his wife and she busied herself by making a cup of tea and preparing a simple lunch for the man.

“I cannot understand it—I cannot understand it—he has met with some fearful accident—his mind does not seem to be right. Yet it is the same Mr. Hillard—see, he sits there as if in a stupor,” whispered the janitor to his wife.

“Would you mind washing my face and hands,” said the sick man, speaking very slowly. I am just off from the train; I have come a long distance. Tell me again about my rooms, please, are they ready?”

“Your rooms! why they are rented out to a new tenant, a doctor,—but you can have the other suite I told you of; you must have your furniture moved back at once.”

“Yes, I see, I must have my furniture moved back

at once—I can have the other suite, that 's so. Who did you say it was took my things away?"

"Why, your attorney, Mr. Fullman, the gentleman who looked after all of your business—your father's executor, was n't he?"

"Yes, yes, my father's executor—yes, that is right I will go to see him, but first I must visit the *Commercial* office—my boy is there. I must see my boy, I must see my boy."

The man was speaking with a suspicious calmness and deliberation. The old janitor and his wife looked at each other inquiringly. Hillard drank a little of the tea and insisted on going to the newspaper office at once to see "his boy." The good old woman tried to restrain him from going out alone, he was sick—could her husband not go instead? No, he would go alone. The janitor went with him as far as Broadway and helped him into the 'bus. It seemed hours before he reached the newspaper office. He stopped at a saloon on the way, as he thought a stimulant would steady his nerves, it only made him more feverish. It was near night when he reached the *Commercial* office. A storm was coming up. He made his way down into the dingy cellar and past the piles of paper. Outside the little office in the corner he paused, and then peered through the sliding window. The gas was burning as usual and the bent form of Uncle Rodgers was crouching over the desk. In vain the visitor looked for the one he sought. With an effort he called—"My boy, my boy! Jimmy, Jimmy! Where is my boy?"

Old Uncle Rodgers gave a jump that upset the ink bottle and toppled over the stool around which his legs were wrapped. He dropped his pen and turned his bulging eyes.

“The boy, I said, where is the boy?” demanded Hillard.

Little Mr. Rodgers was not used to being addressed in this way. He had been in this establishment nearly forty years and a certain respect was due him. Besides that the ink was upset and had made a monstrous blot on the day-book. People who had business to transact with Mr. Rodgers usually did it through the hole in the window; the office door was fastened with a spring lock. The fact that this door was locked and the window too small to admit a human body made Mr. Rodgers very brave on this occasion. He recognized Hillard’s face at once and yelled back in a voice as loud as his cracked falsetto would admit. “Go to the devil! How do I know where your miserable imp is? You thought you played a great joke on us, did n’t you, bringing a girl here in boy’s clothes. Go to the devil!”

This last was delivered in a very screech.

“Shut up, you bald-headed weazen rascal. If you have abused my Jimmy, I will kill you—kill you. Where is the boy?”

This dire threat cooled Mr. Rodgers a trifle and he thought best to give an answer that would take his belligerent visitor in another direction.

“Jimmy? why over at Mrs. Griggs’s of course. Get out of here. I’m mighty glad your attorney has run away with all your property. He beat us too,

and the bank, but he has cleaned you out for keeps. Go away—get out of here.”

“At Mrs. Griggs’s is he?”

“Yes, how many times must I tell you—are you drunk?”

Hillard started for the door. The crutches made their peculiar tramp on the bare floor. Mr. Rodgers thrust his head out of the sliding window. “God help us—he has lost one of his legs.”

The little man dived out of the office and ran after Hillard. He threw his arms around him, he kissed him, he called himself a fool, an ass, a knave, an idiot for insulting his best friend. He asked a dozen questions but waited for no answers. “How did you lose your leg? Have you been to war? Did you know Jimmy was a girl?” etc., etc.

“Forgive me for saying anything about that rascal running away with your money. He was an infamous scoundrel, but I am your friend. You have n’t a dollar in the world but that ’s no difference, I ’m your friend. When you want advice you can always count on Isaiah Rodgers,” added the little man as Hillard shook him off and moved out into the street.





CHAPTER II.

"How use doth breed a habit in a man."

HE held in his hand a half-dollar, the only money he had in the world. Night was coming on ; it was raining hard. Men carrying dinner-pails hurried by, with coat-collars turned up ; girls with shawls over their heads, and workmen streamed out of the shops and stores, making haste to reach their homes. Hillard stood in the storm and leaned against a lamp-post, dazed—as one in a dream. "Here, old man, let me help you under the awning," cheerily spoke a bootblack who took him by the arm. Hillard turned and struck at the boy viciously with the crutch.

Still the rain pelted down.

The darkness fell. Cabs splashed through the slush, and the driver's whip echoed a clear resounding whack when the lash struck the rubber cover of the horse. The cripple must have stood there ten minutes. What were his thoughts ? He had none ; only a blur of recollections. He tried to marshal them in order—to resolve on what to do. No ; all was confused, black, shifting.

On the opposite corner was an underground

saloon. The red light flickered in the wind and seemed to hold the gaze of the wretched man. "It is the lurid light of hell," he muttered. It came to him that he was clutching something in his palm—what was it? Yes; the half-dollar. He hobbled across the street, and slowly made his way down the stairs under the red light.





CHAPTER III.

*“ To-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes ; to-morrow blossoms,
.
.
.
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost.”*

“ **C**OME, git out of here, you fellow with the one leg ; git now. It's 'leven o'clock—you better make for home.”

A rough hand shook his shoulder. Hillard took the crutches held out to him and staggered to his feet.

“ Let me stay here—I'll pay you—let me stay until morning.”

“ No, git out ; this is no lodging-house. You must go home.”

The stout bar-keeper was half-pushing, half-supporting the cripple up the stairway.

“ Yes, I must go home—I must go home,” he said to himself as he stood alone on the sidewalk.

The rain had ceased, but black angry clouds chased each other across the sky, and the wind howled through the network of wires overhead. The street seemed deserted, save for now and then the shadow of a hurrying form whose footsteps

seemed to echo loudly through the lonesome night.

"What are you waiting for?" It was the voice of a policeman. He touched the man with his club. "What are you standing here for? I have been watching you for ten minutes."

"I must go home—I must go home!" came the answer.

"Well, go, then; don't stand here. I'd run you in if you had two legs."

"I must go home. Call a hack and take me home. But first I must have—I must have drink—whiskey—my head is not right—my throat is on fire—get me whiskey, whiskey!"

"You have had too much now, that's what's the matter with you—drunk. I'll call a hack for you though, if you have money."

"Yes, I have money—yes—see!"

He felt in all of his pockets. Then the policeman assisted him in the search—not a penny. The buildings seemed to be whirling around—his brain throbbed with pain. He tried to think—to speak. His form swayed, and he endeavored to steady himself on his crutches, but only the watchman's strong arm prevented his falling.

"Where is your home?—tell me. If you were n't a cripple I'd take you to the station. But you don't seem like a bad fellow. Tell me, where is your home—I'll take you there."

Hillard leaned heavily on the man. He tried to think—no, all was shifting—blurred.

"My home? Yes—I live—yes—at Goolson's,

five miles from Ladoga—yes, take me there, that 's my home."

The policeman shook him smartly and retorted :

"Wake up, man, think ; where do you want to go—where do you live?"

"Exeter Flats—Griggs," replied the man with an effort.

"Why, that is near here—Exeter you say?"

"Yes."

"Well, I will take you there."

They reached the tenement—all was dark. The outer door was open. The watchman flashed his lantern into the hallway.

"Which room?" he asked the drunken man.

It took some time to get the information, but the policeman finally concluded from the incoherent and disjointed answers that the room wanted was on the next floor. It was a hard task to climb the stairs. Finally they reached the door, and the watchman pounded loudly with his club. Affrighted voices were heard inside. "What is wanted?" The question came in a timid feminine tone.

"A man is here who wants to get in—says he lives here. His name is——

"Hillard," spoke the cripple.

"Hillard—his name is Hillard," continued the policeman.

The quality of the voices within changed from those of fear to joy.

"Mr. Hillard, Mr. Hillard is here!" The news seemed to be passed to others.

"Mr. Hillard, can it be possible!" came back a girlish voice.

"Wait, please, just a moment. I will strike a light and we will dress," called back the first woman who had spoken.

The policeman could hear a glib, half-laughing, joyous, hurried conversation that seemed to come from several women all talking together. From the sounds he knew they were putting on their clothing.

The door opened.

A flood of light streamed out—three women were seen standing expectantly. Hillard supported himself in the doorway for an instant, and then plunged heavily forward and fell a helpless mass at their feet.





CHAPTER IV.

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

TWO days of tender nursing and the threatened brain-fever was averted. Hillard found himself in the little cubby-hole apartment that had formerly been "Jimmy's room." He was aware that he had been delirious, but how long he had lain there he knew not.

He lay with eyes closed, and could hear a woman in the adjoining room as she went about her work. The rooms seemed darkened. The head of the bed was placed so he could see out into the little sitting-room. The bird in the window, the struggling geraniums on the window-sill, the bright ingrain carpet, the lace lambrequin on the mantel, the little straw balloon, tied with red ribbons, suspended from the hanging lamp with its pink paper shade, all gradually took form. Hillard recognized the surroundings.

He knew the engraving of "Irving and his Literary Friends," and he wondered again for the thousandth time how such a group of philosophers and scribblers ever happened to meet in Mr. Irving's bachelor quarters. Especially in view of the fact

that many of these men hated each other most cordially. Then he knew the picture of Washington clothed in the Masonic regalia—the apron with the big eye in the centre. And although he could not see the other side of the room, he felt the presence of the fireman's hat that hung on the wall. He knew that below this gigantic hat was the "Exemption Certificate," executed in the most artistic of muscular action Spencerian, telling how Joshua Griggs had served ten years with the gallant Deluge Hose Company, and was therefore free from jury duty.

The pleasant dreamy sort of a reverie was broken by the entrance of a light footstep. Some one took a seat by the bedside. The man closed his eyes on the first approach, and affected sleep—so strong is the habit of pretence. People who play a part are apt to play it to the end; hypocrisy becomes natural. The invalid even imitated the deep breathing of slumber, and rolled his head and muttered to himself, as he thought it was the duty of a sick man to do. But the rolling of his head was only so he could turn his face toward the person whom he knew was sitting in the chair at his bedside. Again he affected the deep breathing. He opened his eyes the very slightest degree; he wanted to see who it was by him. A girl, yes—sixteen perhaps; slight, with hair in short ringlets all over her head. She turned her face. Hillard saw the fine profile as it stood out against the light: the low, square forehead; the straight nose, the short upper lip, the firm chin. She arose and moved out into the other room.

The form was small but shapely ; her skirts came to her shoe tops. She picked up her knitting, came back and worked steadily and rapidly, with eyes closed. Her eyes being shut the man ventured to open his, and so surveyed her as closely as the dim light would permit. He looked at her face and swiftly flying fingers. Then he closed his eyes, reached out one hand, and said very softly :

“ Jimmy ! ”

“ Yes, Mr. Hillard.”

He felt the gentle clasp of her delicate hand ; her warm breath as she stooped over him and kissed his forehead. She sat down, but held his hand close within both of her own. The clock ticked out on the mantel-shelf. The bird chirruped and pecked at the wires of the cage. Mrs. Griggs worked away in the kitchen, and in a minor key sang “ Jesus, Lover of my Soul.”

So the moments passed—five, ten, perhaps.

Hillard was going through an experience that had not been his for years. He was weeping ; the tears ran down and soaked into the pillow under his face, and he tried to keep his eyes closed to conceal the emotion. At last he looked up ; the girl was crying too.

“ Jimmy ? ”

“ Yes, Mr. Hillard.”

“ We are two fools.”

“ Why do you say so, Mr. Hillard ? ”

“ To cry when we are happy. All I wanted was to get back to you and die ; now I want to get well and live. I will never leave you again. If I had

stayed near you instead of going away I would now have two feet instead of one. Don't you admire my crutches, Jimmy?"

The girl did not answer. She took her handkerchief and dried her eyes, then with the same handkerchief she did a like service for him.





CHAPTER V.

*“ True hope is swift and flies with swallow’s wings,
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.”*

MRS. GRIGGS came in. She placed her hand on the man’s brow and felt his pulse. Great was her suppressed satisfaction as she exultantly exclaimed, “ The fever is gone ! ”

The recovery was rapid, and the next day Hillard was dressed—clothed in his right mind and a ten-dollar suit, as he expressed it—and seated comfortably in a big arm-chair out in the sitting-room.

All had restrained their desire to ask questions. Trivial matters would have unearthed a goodly amount of curiosity, but in the face of the dire disasters that had overtaken their friend, the delicacy that goes hand in hand with tender sympathy prevailed. Maud had heard at the office of the absconding of Mr. Hillard’s financial agent, and she had told the family at home. They were pained to hear it, but city people are used to hearing of defalcations and bankruptcies.

Then the Griggses had great respect for Mr. Hillard’s mental resources. They looked upon him as the most capable man they ever knew. And women

are very apt to overestimate a man's ability anyway. To be strong and to be a man—what more is to be desired?

But to the innocent country girl this financial blow to her protector was a great black cloud. It hung over her life like a pall. She could not realize the importance of it; she knew not its proportions; she could not guess its magnitude; it was the ominous unknown. To know the extent of a disaster may be alarming, but to be ignorant of it is terrible. This child felt her life closely tied up with that of Hillard—her protector, brother, father, friend. His going away and not writing her grieved her deeply. His absence was an oppression to her brave and hopeful heart. Mrs. Griggs and Maud were kind and considerate, but somehow the respect—the mingled pride and love which daughters often have in, and for, a father were all centred on Hillard. At times she was almost boastful of his intellect and position.

It was only a few days after his going away that Mrs. Griggs had requested "Jimmy" to stay at home for half a day and help her at some household task. Maud was at the office. Martha, the little girl, at school. Only "Jimmy" and Mrs. Griggs were at home. The good old lady put her arms around the curly-headed child and pressed the soft cheek to her heart, as she stroked the wealth of brown ringlets. Perhaps her voice was a trifle unsteady and her eyes dim as she said: "Dear heart, I love you as my own child. Now we must do what is right and best. Maud and I have known it for

some time, and we have talked it all over together and decided on what is best for you to do. We have bought you two of the nicest and softest dresses,—come in my bedroom, and I will show you. See, this one is quaker gray, and the other is brown; and Maud got you underclothing and stockings, and a pretty little hat and a nice pair of shoes. You will be a young lady soon—you are now. Would you not rather be a nice, pretty sensible girl than a boy? After this you will be Jimmy no more. You shall be my Cornelia Smith.”

The kind mother kissed the warm cheek and together they mingled their tears. Then the good woman helped the child to dress. The boy's clothes were all carefully folded and laid away in the bottom of a trunk. With the help of a few deft stitches here and there, and a new arrangement of the buttons, the soft Quaker dress was a good fit. Maud had put aside a pretty ribbon to match the dress; this was tastefully arranged at the slender but shapely neck. An attempt was made to part the brown curls in the middle. Then a big white apron was produced, and the two were ready to do the work that had been laid out.

Cornelia was a little awkward and embarrassed at first in her new costume;—blushing, she stole sly glances at herself in the gilt-framed mirror that hung between the windows. “Mrs. Griggs,” said she, after about the tenth trip to the looking-glass, “Mrs. Griggs, you do not—you do not—Mrs. Griggs—you don't think I am a very homely little girl, do you, Mrs. Griggs?”

“No, dear heart, you are a very pretty girl, but you must not be vain. Young ladies must try to be good, and not think of their looks too much. But, Cornelia, you must call me mother after this, not Mrs. Griggs, and when Maud and Martha come they will call you sister.”

Little Martha was duly waylaid in the hall, and instructed that she must not be surprised when she saw Jimmy in girl's clothes, but must take it as a matter of course. She obeyed instructions so far as to go up and kiss her new sister and call her Cornelia. Then, after walking around her twice, she asked her mother in a loud voice: “Is Jimmy goin' to wear his pants to-morrow; if not, who is goin' to wear 'em? Or is they going to be made up into carpet rags, or wot?”

Maud came from the office an hour earlier than usual, and she too kissed her new sister. The box of flowers in the window was called on for a contribution from its scanty store, and a bouquet graced the tea-table, an extravagance only indulged in on birthdays or Mrs. Griggs's wedding anniversary, which was always duly celebrated.

It was a jolly little party that gathered around the table for the evening meal. An onlooker would not have guessed that anything unusual had happened had it not been for little Martha's attempt not to “notice anything,” which she did by asking very seriously: “How soon will Jimmy be home, sister Maud?” Her pardon was granted in the laugh that followed.

All of this was told to Mr. Hillard that morning as he sat propped up in the big arm-chair.



“ YOU DO NOT THINK I ’M A VERY HOMELY LITTLE
GIRL, DO YOU ? ”

See page 243.

“And so you did not know that you brought us a girl and not a boy?” asked Mrs. Griggs with a look of incredulity.

“No, most positively, no.”

“But, when Maud told Mr. White that Jimmy was a girl, he shouted with laughter, and said it was just like you to play such a trick.”

“And did you send Cornelia (as you call her) back to work at the *Commercial* office?”

“No; Mr. Rodgers was furious when he heard of the deception that had been practised on him, and would not take her back under any considerations. But it is just as well. It would not have been pleasant for her there anyway. Every one in the whole establishment heard of it, and some one wrote it up in the *Herald*; they all thought it one of your practical jokes.”

“The fools, do they take me for a brute!”

The conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of Cornelia, who had been out on an errand for Mrs. Griggs. Hillard noticed that the girl wore large blue glasses to protect her eyes, and that when she came in Mrs. Griggs darkened the rooms by drawing down the blinds.

“Come in here, Jimmy, my boy, cheerily called Hillard. Lord, but you are a pretty girl; you are as dainty as a wax doll. I am proud of you. Raise those blinds so I can get a look at her, Mrs. Griggs. Why do you insist on keeping the room so dark?”

“Cornelia’s eyes have been troubling her—did I not tell you! Maud is teaching her shorthand and

arithmetic, and she has been studying too closely. The doctor said we must keep the room darkened."

The shades were raised while Hillard had the girl stand in front of him and turn around several times for his inspection.

"Well, well, I am proud of her,—she is only as big as a pint of peanuts—but a Greek, a pure Greek. Don't you think she looks like me, Mrs. Griggs?"





CHAPTER VI.

"O God! that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains."

WITHIN the breast of every man should dwell a lion's heart. In civilized communities the State protects the individual, and thus in time, through lack of exercise, the individual loses the capacity to protect himself. Our forefathers, who wrestled with wind and storm and dared the elements or faced wild beasts or savage men as wild, laughed at danger. But we have invented paranoia and paresis and nervous prostration and mental exhaustion and various brands of debility; and several gentlemen have immortalized themselves by palming off on us brand-new diseases. One, Dr. Bright especially, has become quite famous by booming his ailment. Neat little red plush boxes, containing silver-plated hypodermic outfits, are offered in the shop windows as holiday presents. The gifted Dr. Mackenzie said that this century will live in history as the Age of Cod-liver Oil. This same eminent physician was once called on by a citizen of the United States.

"And so you are from America, are you," said the

Doctor,—“ America is a great country, great country, —for catarrh.”

Announcements of “ The only Sarsaparilla ” and “ The kind that cures ” greet us from barn roofs that should be sacred to moss and silky gray shingles. As we journey by rail we look out to enjoy the landscape, and we behold references to “ that tired feeling ” that give it to us. We take up the paper to read the doings of the great men of the earth, and our eyes light on pictures of worthy housewives who have gained a pound a day or lost it, as the case may be. Pepsin, hypophosphites, bromide, cocaine, chloral are sold in the dry-goods stores. The opium smugglers are making such vast fortunes that they bid fair to rival in society the Coal-Oil Johnnies.

The civilization in our cities breeds disease, and it breeds cowards. We wear our nerves outside of our clothes, and we tremble at the rustle of a mortgage. In our dreams we are haunted by a gigantic Summons and Complaint ; and when we awaken, about the only thing that will give relief is the hypodermic apparatus in the beautiful little red plush box. Our forefathers went to battle with stouter hearts than we take to the dentists.

John Hillard was an exception to (nearly) all city men ; he was no coward. And yet his character was very faulty. He seemed to retain a few strong virtues at the expense of others.

We find him now at the tenement-house apartment of a poor widow. He has come here without invitation. He has lost one leg, and has not yet recovered from the physical shock. His fortune is

gone—he is penniless. Yet he is not cast down—not he ! He is the life of the household.

Now let us suppose that he had no home to go to, that no woman's tender care ministered to his wants ; that only the police-station or the almshouse lodged him, and that charity supplied his needs. What then !

But here was a human being that joined him to earth (and to heaven ?) We do not lose interest in ourselves or in the world until we lose interest in all of earth's (or heaven's ?) children. If we can fix our heart on *one*, it is enough—we ask no more. The purest, strongest, most spiritual tie of which we know is that between a man and a woman. This bond cannot exist in its perfect state without the sexual quality. They reckon ill who leave this out.

Hillard's heart was held fast by this girl,—this bit of human flotsam that had come drifting across his life course. He watched her as she moved about the room at her work ; at her knitting when the busy fingers flew and her eyes were closed ; at meals he insisted that she should be served first. He walked past her just for the purpose of stroking the brown curls ; he sent her on errands only because he wanted her to wait on him. He borrowed books of the “ first floor front ” and read to her E. P. Roe's stories,—anything. He explained to the family that he was going to look after her education himself,—planned her raiment, and ordered samples of dress-goods from Stewart's, etc., etc.

And yet in this love the “ sexual quality ” of which we have just spoken was absent ; or, if it was

present, Hillard knew it not. Was it the love of father for daughter? He believed it so. The child accepted it as a matter of course. She brought the hot water for him to shave, worked a whole day padding his crutches, proposed making him a pair of knit slippers, and cried when he said: "Thank heaven I need but one."

He never thought of going to work—this man who had been brought up in idleness. What cared he! He had always been taken care of, the money came some way,—why worry! "We are going through life for the last time; let us be comfortable. We need but little. Give me the luxuries of life and I will dispense with the necessities," he used to say.

And yet he knew that all the income of that household came from the hard earnings of Maud Griggs, the stenographer. She it was who pounded out of the typewriter the sustenance to feed those mouths. But she never complained; she even stopped at the grocery and bought a paper of "Old Tom" and a clay pipe so Hillard could kill the insects on the plants that grew in the green box in the window. It was very necessary that this should be done, he explained. But on the second day, the "Old Tom" being gone, he concluded that "Bull Brand" would be better for the purpose. So the "Bull Brand" was secured, and the company were called upon to admire the elegant color the clay pipe was taking on. "It's a genuine meerschaum!" he exclaimed. "They sent it in mistake. I would not take twenty dollars for it; with it I can woo wisdom from the Virginia weed."

He sat by the window for hours, smoked and philosophized, smoked and talked to himself; smoked and thought out plans for the future,—hazy, lazy, smoky, misty plans that faded away into nothingness like the smoke from the penny “meer-schaum.” Every day an Italian came and ground out grewsome music under the window, and regularly Hillard would shout bravo! and toss the organ-grinder a nickel borrowed from Mrs. Griggs.

After ten days had passed he concluded that he would go out on Wall Street and do some business. He went to his bankers and found that, as he had expected, the rascally lawyer who had a power of attorney had drawn out all of his money. The man had gambled and dealt in margins. It was the old story,—he took others' money, expecting to pay it back. He took more to get back what he had borrowed. He grew desperate and hypothecated securities. At last he took what was remaining, and fled.

Hillard sat in the private office of the cashier and heard the tale without the twitch of a muscle. On the roll-top desk was a cigar. Hillard reached forward, took it, bit off the end, and asked for a match.

“It was lucky I drew out that thousand dollars the day before he skipped. That's what we call ‘providential.’ Can you loan me ten dollars until to-morrow or next day?”

He secured the money and walked off, his crutches echoing over the tiled floor.

He called on Mr. White, who expressed great sympathy for him in the double disaster of the lost leg and the missing fortune.

“Never mind, Whitey, the leg will not grow on, of course, as if it were a lobster’s claw ; but as for the fortune,—I ’m all right. I ’ll make another ; I have a scheme on hand. By the way, White, I want to see you in the hall a moment.”

They went out.

“Loan me fifty for a few days.” Mr. White counted out the fifty dollars and gave it to him. He hobbled home, and great was the look of relief on the face of Mrs. Griggs and Cornelia Hillard when they saw him. What was their fear ? The demon of drink—that monster who slays incessantly and is never satisfied ; who seizes good and bad alike ; who turns pity to hate, love to fear, life to death ; whose joy is to crush, to ruin, to smother, to slay, to destroy. He lives in a palace where there are shining mirrors and mellow-colored lights, soothing music, toothsome viands, hearty welcome, and genial warmth. It looks like life, but it is the highway to perdition ; and he who tarries here,—his end is madness and the grave.





CHAPTER VII.

“And what wilt thou do? Beg, when that is spent?”

MRS. GRIGGS and Cornelia saw Hillard coming; they met him at the foot of the stairs, and got in his way in an anxious endeavor to help him up the steps. One would have thought by their merry greetings that he had been gone a month.

“Hold your apron, Mother Griggs,” laughingly shouted Hillard when they reached the little sitting-room. She did so, and he tossed her the roll of bills that Mr. White and the banker had given him.

“And so your money was not all gone,” exclaimed the woman, in glad surprise.

“Most of it has vamoosed, but not all, you see!”

“How glad we are for your sake,” spoke the girl.

When Maud came home she was joyfully apprised that Mr. Hillard’s money was not all taken by the bad man,—“he still has some left!”

A clean tablecloth was put on the supper table, and Mrs. Griggs brought out her old silver spoons that had been in the family a hundred years; and little Martha was despatched to the grocery for a can of apricots,—all in honor of the good news.

Some days after a levy was made on two friends at the club-house where Hillard formerly had a membership, and a cork leg was purchased. He was advised not to discard the crutches for a few days, "until the new leg got used to its business."

He marched proudly home, and explained to the ladies, "It's better than the old one,—you would never notice it in my walk"—and he strode across the room with a very marked hitch and a loud squeaking of the newly acquired anatomy.

"Never, never!" the women spoke in chorus. "Your walk is perfect."

Then he showed how he could kick, but in an attempt to "do the can-can" he got a fall, square on his back, that disturbed the plastering downstairs, and might have done damage to the corporosity of a man with fibre less tough.

It may be an excellent thing to be able to keep a secret, and it may not. Some people keep to themselves things that should be explained; they hug to their hearts facts which others should know.

Hillard was a miser in feeling and often needlessly economized in expression. He had been for ten weeks in the home of the father and mother of his "Jimmy" but he never so much as breathed a hint that he ever knew them. Sometimes she would speak of her old home out in Indiana and wonder how the folks were getting along. But at such times Hillard would divert her attention by speaking of something else. Perhaps he was afraid that she would want to go back and then he might lose her. He did not even explain in any way about the acci-



AN ANXIOUS ENDEAVOR TO HELP.

See page 253.

dent by which he lost his leg. "A railway smash-up," he said, "only a plain, every-day wreck. I'm going to sue the railroad company for forty thousand dollars' damages."

It was not explained that a tramp stealing a ride on a freight train runs his own risks and would have a difficult task to collect damages.

"You were cared for at a hospital?" asked Mrs. Griggs.

"Yes, at a hospital—a hospital is a nice place—they saw your leg off while you wait."

The women saw that he did not wish to pursue the subject, so they dropped it.

He was the most talkative of men and also the most self-contained and silent when he did not care to speak.

Yet he wrote a letter of six pages to Mrs. Goolson at Ladoga, telling her of her runaway daughter whom he was now educating. He told of her looks, how she had grown, her progress in study, her health, his plans for the future—all in the most glowing, hopeful manner. This letter must have warmed the heart of the work-worn woman out on that lonesome farm. No address was given on this letter so no answer came back. He never wrote but this one message, and from this time forth Ladoga and the Goolson family do not appear in our story.

"Some day I will take the young lady and we will surprise the folks on the farm by a visit," he said to himself.

The visit was never made.

Hillard seldom went out of the immediate vicinity

of Exeter flats. He made friends with the other tenants in the house. He smoked with the shoemaker downstairs and polished up his German by conversations with the family across the hall. He whittled out a miniature windmill and put it together inside of a bottle to the great delight of little Martha. In the evenings he would read Plato aloud or translate from Rousseau's *Contrat Social* for the benefit of the ladies until they went to sleep in their chairs. At other times impromptu concerts would be given; the wheezy little melodeon would be called on for double duty and all would gather around the instrument and sing gospel songs until the people downstairs thought a Methodist revival was in progress. Every day the Italian came and ground out the gruesome music under the window and regularly Hillard threw him the nickel.

He would occasionally "go out on Wall Street," and come back always with a certain sum of money—twenty-five dollars—twenty dollars—ten. No matter what the amount, it was always religiously handed over to Mother Griggs, who was ordered to catch it in her apron. Many clay pipes were colored, and when a stem was broken the damaged "meerschäum" was duly boiled out and given to little Martha for blowing soap bubbles. The old clock was sacred for the packages of "Bull Brand," and the only thing Hillard was forbidden to do was to puff smoke at the bird.

The lessons given to "Jimmy" were duly recited and the girl was making rapid progress. "A splendid intellect—bright, keen.—It is the intuitive mind.



" HE READ PLATO ALOUD FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LADIES UNTIL THEY WENT TO SLEEP."

See page 256.

—She knows all things and the study only recalls,” Hillard often said.

So the days passed.

Hillard's chin was showing a tendency to the duplex. His well-modelled form filled out his coat even better than ever. Things were easy and comfortable with him. His trips around among the old time friends were made a little more often than before. He did not ask any of them for fifty dollars now—ten was about the limit, and it was always requested as a loan, not a gift. Some whom he had been to before only gave him five when he asked for ten. One man refused him flat and asked him why he did not go to work. To work? He never thought of it. But why should *he* work? He had been an only son. Sent to a private school in boyhood, then a boarding-school, then a military academy, then college, and two years' travel in Europe had “completed” his education. His father died about this time, and the executor kindly took the burden of responsibility off from the only son's shoulders and required him to do nothing but endorse his vouchers.

The executor stood so high in the estimation of the elder Hillard that he provided in his will that no bonds should be given.

But now the upright and honorable executor had disappeared. “I am not bothered by having to sign his vouchers,” said John Hillard.

Work! Steady, old-fashioned, every-day, humdrum work!—he never for a moment seriously considered the matter.

His cool assurance would have made the fortune

of a life insurance agent. He could have hypnotized even the most sceptical into a land syndicate. He could have edited a paper, acted as reporter, led an orchestra, or run a barber shop, but these things never occurred to him.

"So you refuse me, do you," said Hillard to his former friend, "you refuse me—wait until you want a little accommodation and come to me—I will grant you the favor and not thrust advice on you either."

"Look you, John Hillard, you will never be able to loan any man ten dollars—you will never have it, for you are fast drifting into beggardom."

Hillard was hurt. His rhinoceros hide was at last pierced. He made his way straight to the nearest saloon—walked in against his will—damning himself for doing so all the time.

It was very late when he reached his home that night. Only Mrs. Griggs was waiting for him.

"It's the cork leg, Mother Griggs—it don't seem to work right," hiccoughed the man. With much effort she managed to get him to bed, and next day his dreaded transgression was not mentioned, but a cloud seemed to have come over that happy little household.





CHAPTER VIII.

*"The idea of her life did sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination."*

IT was Christmas time.

"Things have changed a trifle since a year ago, Mother Griggs," said Hillard. "'How the world do move.' But we will have a Christmas dinner, just the same, and invite Uncle Rodgers too—he was here last year, you know!"

A polite invitation was written and despatched, but a scathing reply came back, saying: "I cannot conscientiously associate with those who have been guilty of the gross deceptions that you have."

All of the good advice that he had given to Jimmy concerning the proper way to conduct a large business was worse than wasted. He blamed Hillard for the imposition, and he blamed "Jimmy" for being a girl.

"It 's all dam nonsense," he once said to Mr. White; "if you had left that Jimmy Smith with me I could have made a business man of him, sir; yes, sir, a business man! Your father would never have been guilty of such trifling, sir!"

He never really got the affair straightened out in

his own mind. The more he thought of it the more injured his feelings became and the more tangled the circumstances.

But the Griggs household had their Christmas, Uncle Rodgers or not, and a great laugh they enjoyed over his coldly dignified note.

The stockings were hung up; everybody received a present—not quite so costly or numerous as were the gifts a year ago, but still it was a jolly time.

Mr. White was the possessor of a rare old violin. He did not play himself, but he happened to think that Hillard formerly did, and he sent the violin as a Christmas present. Nothing more acceptable could have been given. Hillard was as pleased as a child. He held the box on his knees and looked at it; then examined every part of the instrument; he keyed it up most carefully, caressed it, rosined the bow. The whole family gathered around expectantly; Hillard put the violin back in the box and refused to play. He got up and paced the floor, the cork leg creaking at every step. It was a strange procedure.

The day passed.

That night long after all had retired to their rooms the sleepers were awakened by the sounds of sweet music. The sounds came from Hillard's room. He was playing in the dark, "Home, Sweet Home," with improvised variations.

Many were the hours that Hillard sat in that little room in Exeter flats and practised on the violin.

He smoked, played, read aloud, and listened to "Jimmy" (he would call her by no other name) as

she recited her lessons. But it became difficult for her to read — she said the print was too fine — so Hillard read to her. Her eyes did not pain her. The doctor said there was no inflammation — the organs of sight needed rest. Had she known any great sorrow or mental disturbance? Why, no — but, then — yes, her childhood — it had been full of care.

The doctor held Hillard by the sleeve as the girl passed out into the hall.

“The symptoms are a little like amaurosis,” he whispered — “paralysis of the optic nerve. But I hope not; come again next week.”

At meal-time the girl would often have difficulty in distinguishing the dishes on the table. Sometimes she could not see a plate when it was directly in front of her. Hillard spread her bread, cut the meat, and waited on her, telling funny stories all the time.

Her love of music increased; sweet sounds seemed to soothe and refresh her spirit like gentlest sleep. Her general health was good, she suffered no pain, she never complained. She was not unhappy. Gradually, gently, slowly, surely she shifted out of the world of sight into the realm of sound. She knew all the inmates of the house by the footstep and the neighbors by their voices. She went alone to the grocery, down at the corner, and knew all parts of the house and where everything was. She took care of the bird, and the flowers in the south window were her especial delight; she watered them, tended them, talked to them, picked off the dead

leaves, anticipating the time when it would be warm enough to fill the window boxes.

Gradually all the studies were stopped but music. Hillard taught her to play the violin and to sing and they each acted as a stimulant on the other in these musical studies.

"I have n't the classical knowledge," Hillard often complained. "I know harmony only by ear; I should know the technique to teach you properly. You are getting beyond me."

"Do you know a competent teacher?" he once asked of the Rev. Algernon Burtis, who occasionally called.

"Why, you know my sister gives lessons in voice culture; she keeps house for me. Her time is pretty well taken, but I believe she will be glad to instruct Miss Hillard — wonderfully promising voice — very wonderful, so sweet and sympathetic. I will bring my sister around to-morrow and we will talk it over."

Mr. Burtis's sister was ten years older than he. She had received a thorough musical training in Paris and now gave vocal lessons to a select class of her own choosing. She was a great help to her brother in his clerical work, and when he asked her to call with him on the family in Exeter flats she gladly acquiesced. Great was her surprise when she heard the young girl sing. She consented to take the girl as a pupil; and, in answer to a question, said her price would be one dollar a lesson. Hillard insisted that it should be no less than she charged others — that is, two dollars and a half,—and he



HILLARD TAUGHT HER TO PLAY THE VIOLIN.

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limped over to where she sat and wrung her hand in gratitude.

Twice a week Mr. Hillard took the girl up to the rectory on 18th Street. Sometimes the clergyman would call for her when he happened to be in the neighborhood on her "music day," as he expressed it.

"You are all so kind to me—you do so much for me, and I can do nothing in return," she used to say.

Occasionally Mrs. Griggs and the girls would go to church on Sunday, at St. Cecilia's. They were not "church people," in the commonly accepted sense; but they liked the beautiful music, the mild-colored lights, the soft peal of the organ. And then Mr. Burtis read the service with much feeling, and he once said he could preach better if he saw their faces before him.

So they went. And the kind old gentleman who was usher at the left-hand door of the vestibule always led the plain people from Exeter flats straight up the aisle, right by all those folks in the richest of garments, that threw off the delicate odors of tea-roses and jasmine, right past them all to the rector's own pew, the second seat from the front. No one sat here but Miss Burtis. She always greeted them with the kindest of smiles, and insisted that her pupil should sit next to her. They knelt side by side, their prayers ascended together, and during the sermon they sat hand in hand. When they stood up to sing, the young girl held the book with her friend, but her eyes were raised so that she

looked up and out toward the great angel of light that shone bright in the richly colored tints away up in the chancel window.

“I cannot see to read the lines,” she said, “the light in the church is so dim.”





CHAPTER IX.

*"She is mine own,
And I as rich in having such a jewel
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,
The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold."*

THE days turned to weeks, the weeks to months. The ice had moved out of the harbor, the slush from the streets, and winter had retreated to the far north. Playful spring breezes, like children when school is out, chased each other and frolicked in glee. Out at Central Park the violets peeped forth curiously, while white May flowers trembled in innocent joy.

It was the last of April.

Park policeman Number 138, in sober gray, watched a stoutly built, smooth-shaven man who walked very awkwardly: swinging one foot around and then forward, striking the heel to the ground in a measured way. The man carried a stout cane on which he leaned heavily at every step. Plainly dressed was this man, almost "seedy." His face showed intellect, but lines of care were gathering across the brow—the man was troubled. Not much perhaps—a little.

Park policeman Number 138 saw all this, but he would never have seen the man at all had it not been

for the strangely beautiful face of the girl who was holding the lame man's hand as they walked. She was a young woman, eighteen perhaps, modestly attired, but a form so slight, so slender, so shapely, that people turned and looked. And then the face—dark and lacking a little the fresh color of life's spring-time; the hair, nut-brown and all in ringlets.

"She is a most charming little creature, but it was the look out of her eyes that gave me such a start," said Number 138 to himself. "She gazed at me with her big, brown, open eyes—looked right at me but did not seem to be aware of me. I stepped aside to let them pass, and all the time those eyes looked straight ahead, right up, over and past me. There, I will follow them into the Art Museum," said the policeman.

He did so. This curious couple moved around hand in hand, talking in low tones. The man seemed to be describing the things that were on exhibition. They stopped before that grand painting at the top of the first stairway. The girl looked straight in front at one spot; the man's gaze wandered over the canvas from one part to another, and he pointed with his hand to the various figures as he described the scene to the girl. She said: "Yes, yes, I see, I see—how sublime!" But all the while the big, open, brown eyes were looking out straight in front.

They moved on and Number 138 lost them in the crowd.

The policeman leaned against the balustrade and mused to himself: "Such beautiful eyes too! such innocence, such purity—her very soul looked forth—the eyes of a Madonna! But blind—blind!"



CHAPTER X.

"Of thee, my dear one, thee, who art ignorant of what thou art."

DULL and dense is that man who cannot get a sweet delight in the cool and quiet of a great church on a week day. Outside there is the reverberating hum of city traffic; within, the light streams through colored windows, patterns the carpet, illumines the empty pews, and weaves delicate tracteries where the beams cross in mid-air.

All is peace, rest ; solemn, sweet, serene.

Miss Burtis was now giving her pupil an occasional lesson on the pipe organ. The great solemn church was a solace to the soul of this girl. Sweet, dreamy reveries carried her spirit far away as she played. The old stone church, with its heavy timbers, and gilded carvings, and blazoned windows, and majestic scutcheons, and fantastic beams she saw not, but she *felt* them all and more.

She had a religion, had this blind girl, a very foolish, unreasonable religion, without logic, or sequence, or plan. Grotesque, pathetic, perhaps, to those who knew better. But they let her keep it; even Mr. Burtis, trained theologian that he was, and knowing all about the science of holy things, did not see fit

to show her the error of her way. There was a warmth of fancy in it, a spirituality of vision. She had many gods and deified things—gave souls to flowers and birds.

Her religion was a vague jumble of veneration and familiarity. An innocent commingling of the pagan and the Christian. She heard voices that others did not hear. She saw sights that never came to the eyes of others. Victim of darkness, yet from out this perpetual eclipse the soul looked forth. This bright, open, yet dead look had in it a celestial intensity.

She was blind, but she beheld the invisible.

With the going out of the light from her eyes and the dawning of womanhood, had come a spiritual power that others could not fathom. Her friends were awed by her, just a little, for even in the highest love there may be found a trace of fear.

"She seems to stand on a summit and look off into infinity," Mr. Hillard once whispered to Mrs. Griggs. "It is the power of music that has wrought this change. Where will it end? I almost tremble."

Night, solitude, loneliness, ignorance, indigence, squalor, strife, hunger, cold, thirst—all the manifold misery of the city poor she knew nought of. Hard words, fierce passions, low thoughts, evil deeds,—all passed her by and touched her not. She was ignorant of man, but familiar with God.

Her soul was as pure as the crocus just born out of the snow. As she watered the thirsty flowers that grew in the window boxes she would caress each delicate petal and drink in the perfume as if

feeding upon it. She talked to the buds and blossoms, and seemed to be holding communion with each tiny bursting leaf.

Can the blind see flowers?

She would sing and talk to herself, often oblivious of others who were in the room, for her dreams and her youth and her simplicity were all unconscious things, as things must be to be great and good. She was as unaware of what she was as the blossoms in the green box in the window.

Such was her love for flowers that Hillard sometimes took her over to a great greenhouse in Brooklyn, where an acquaintance of his was in charge. They would stay for an hour, moving slowly up and down the long hallways where the plants were banked on either side. The blind girl would pass her hand over the delicate blossoms and caress the leaves. The touch of a person who could see might have broken the delicate stalks, but the hand of the blind girl never did. The proprietor took a delight in her presence, and when she departed there was always ready a basket of pansies, pinks, or roses, which was given to her.

"We cannot come often if you give us flowers," she once said to the man.

"Yes, but your being here more than pays for the few blossoms you carry away. I wish you would come every day. Few people appreciate beauty as you do!"



CHAPTER XI.

"A violet in the youth of primy nature."

THE "collecting trips" were now being made by Hillard with more frequency than formerly, but he very seldom brought in a five-dollar bill. "Times are scarce: the world owes me a living, and I must collect it," he exclaimed to Mrs. Griggs. The good woman thought he was collecting rents. He went from store to store, office to office, club to club. Sometimes he even accosted men whom he had never before seen, for the loan of a dollar. Those who had at first given him five dollars on request now gave him a quarter, and even Mr. White had handed fifty cents the last time he called.

Nearly every time he came home his breath was strong with the fumes of liquor. Occasionally he staggered, but he was generally aware of his condition and ashamed of it. At such times he pretended illness and tried to hide himself away in his room from the family. When he did not come home in the evening on time, Mrs. Griggs would wait for him and often have to help him up the stairs and put him to bed.

Oh, the misery, the black depths of the misery of women who wait away the long hours of the night, watching and waiting for drunken men!

They are to be found in every hamlet, every village, every town, in every street, in every city. Women and innocent tender children are the real sufferers from strong drink. They are robbed of food, robbed of clothing, robbed of comfort, robbed of education, robbed of love, that saloon-keepers may thrive. The tears of these lonely, trembling women, who wait for the shuffling feet—their tears are an ocean. But even that ocean cannot wash away the sins of those who sit in high places and thrive by the traffic in strong drink. The cries of suffering children fall on ears that are deaf; the prayers of the waiting and watching women ascend to a heaven that seems but brass, and they can only wring their work-worn hands and cry—How long, O Lord, how long!

Yet John Hillard knew his danger—he fought against it.

“There is only one way, Mother Griggs,” he said to her one morning after one of those nights of shame. “Let Jimmy go with me whenever I leave this house and I will never drink another drop of the accursed stuff.”

And so the next day the blind girl went with him on the “collecting tour” from office to office, from store to store, from bank to bank. He led her by the hand as they walked in and the busy clerks looked up in wonderment. The strange beauty of the girl won before a word was spoken. Hillard would

leave her standing by the entrance, her eyes looking up and out into the distance. He would accost his man and say a low voice, calling attention to the girl: "She is blind, I am giving her a musical education; she has great talent. I intend to send her to Paris for study. Will you loan me a dollar?"

Very rarely was he refused when the man he appealed to saw the girl. One old gentleman who had known Hillard in his days of prosperity looked up from his desk and answered: "No, you have been here too often already. You should work."

"But the girl—look, she is standing there by the door—she is blind; I intend to send her to Europe to study music."

The old gentleman turned his eyes in the direction indicated. Then he adjusted his glasses and looked again: then he muttered slowly to himself, "Blind! blind!" as he thrust his hand in his pocket and gave a handful of small coin to Hillard without counting it.

It was a generous pile of silver that was laid on Mother Griggs's table that night; all denominations from dimes to dollars.

Hillard was jubilant.

"I am going to take Jimmy to Paris to study. That is the city for music!" he exclaimed.

"But do all of those men we call on owe you?"

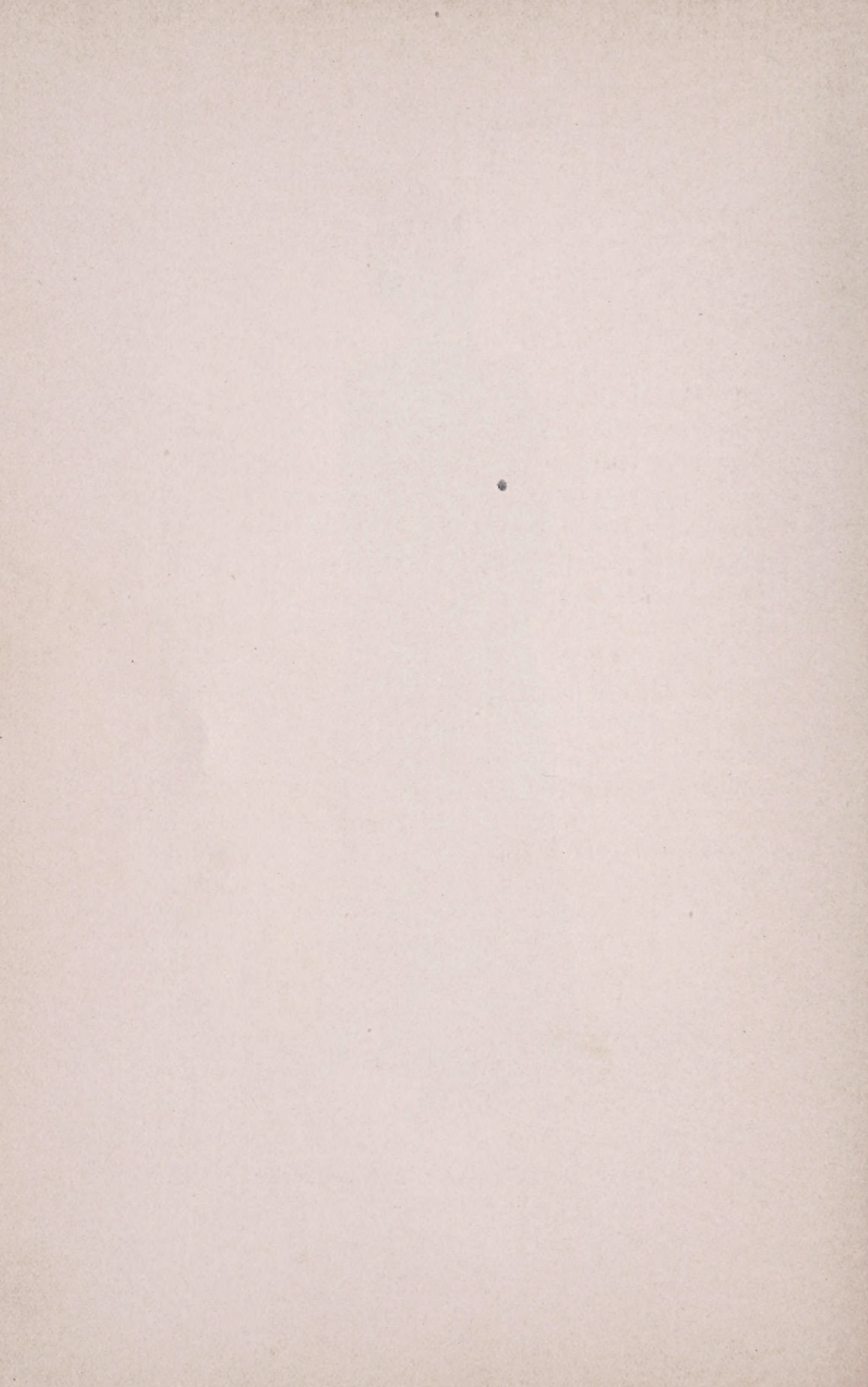
"Why, yes, of course, you do not think I would beg, do you?"

He lighted his pipe and took down the violin, strumming it gently with his fingers.



HILLARD WOULD LEAVE HER STANDING BY
THE ENTRANCE.

See page 272.



“Paris! Paris! You shall be a great operatic star. The whole country shall yet come and lay their garlands at your feet. We will go to Paris and then come back here and take the country by storm. To Paris—to Paris! success, fame, wealth, honor! You shall have it all!”

18





CHAPTER XII.

*"Oh, now for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content."*

THE blind girl was to sing a solo at St. Cecilia's the next Sunday. The rector insisted on it.

"No member of our choir can approach her in sweetness of tone and the depth of feeling that she puts into her song."

The clergyman was sitting in Mrs. Griggs's little parlor. He often called now.

"So you think the girl has a fair voice, do you," asked Hillard, looking up with a pleasant smile of satisfaction on his face. He was glad to see that she was receiving recognition. He glanced around at Maud and Mrs. Griggs as much as to say, "I told you so."

"Voice! why it is an angelic voice. Our musical director will see that she is paid too!"

"Oh, no difference about that. You must not count on her every Sunday though. Fact is Mr. Burtis, I think I will take her to Paris and have her study for the stage."

"What! Not for the stage?"

"Why, yes—opera you know."



“ TO PARIS ! TO PARIS ! SUCCESS ! FAME ! WEALTH ! HONOR ! ”

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"No, no, Mr. Hillard, she is too fine a character to ever brush against the world in that way. She must only sing in a church. Why, no man could hear that voice without being the better for it—It is a sermon."

"As good as one of your sermons?"

There was a touch of cynicism in the tone.

"Yes, yes—a song from that girl will do as much good as one of my sermons. Come and hear both next Sunday and you shall judge."

Hillard was coiling up a little strip of newspaper. He leaned over and lit it in the grate and applied the light to his pipe. He smiled as he held his head back and blew out a ring of smoke that floated across the room.

"To church, eh! If I have n't forgot what the inside of a church is I am a peppercorn—but I believe I will go just once."

The next day was Friday, Mr. Burtis came for the girl in the afternoon that she might go and rehearse her solo with the organ accompaniment.

"To-morrow we are going to see the good man who has the conservatory. He has promised me two big bouquets, one for your pulpit and one to place near me when I sing. He belongs to St. Cecilia's, you know," spoke the girl.

Hillard joked with the clergyman and renewed his promise to attend the services on Sunday.

After the clergyman and the girl had departed, Hillard called to Mrs. Griggs who was at work in an adjoining room, "I say, Mother Griggs, I believe I will just go up there to the church now and see

how things look. I can bring Jimmy back, it will save Mr. Burtis the trouble. He is very kind any way to take such an interest in the child."

Hillard put on his overcoat, picked up his cane, walked over to Broadway, and took a 'bus for 18th Street. He reached the church, and as he entered he heard the organ playing softly. The man had the true musician's ear. He stood just inside the door and listened—now soft, slow, then louder and louder, until the room seemed filled with the swelling waves of harmony.

"There is music in a church organ after all," he said as he moved quietly to the nearest pew and seated himself, leaning against a pillar.

The splendid height of the ceiling, the beautiful windows, the decorations—sombre brown and russet merging into gold, caught his eye, and he feasted the senses of sight and sound as the organ played.

"She will sing better if she does not know I am here," he said. "I will wait—what a joke it is. She will begin soon—there, yes—that is the prelude. Now!"

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. - He maketh me to
lie down in green pastures,
He leadeth me, he leadeth me—by still waters."

It was that beautiful arrangement of the Twenty-third Psalm, the chant being set for a soprano voice. Clear and sweet—not quite strong enough possibly to fill that great church, but there was rare feeling in that voice. Hillard closed his eyes and was wafted on the wings of music on, and on, and on. He was

in a state of half dreamy reverie. The organ had ceased, the beautiful voice was still, but the man sitting with closed eyes bowed his head and whispered: "The voice of an angel—the voice of an angel."

His eyes wandered once more across the vaulted dome beneath the chancel; he saw the great angel of light that seemed poised in the wealth of color in the great round window. He drank in the beauty of it all; that voice and the gentle swell of the organ still sounding in his ears. He was not aware that the music had ceased. His eyes ran across to the opposite side of the building, to the bottom of the stairway that ascended to the organ loft. He thought he heard voices in low conversation. He listened, he looked, yes, he could make out the figures standing close together. It was too dark to see clearly, but that instant a rift of rosy light came streaming in from the great angel poised in the chancel window. Hillard saw—what? The clergyman holding the blind girl in his arms. Her hands were caressing his head, his neck, his face. A passing cloud cut off the ray of ruby light—darkness.

Hillard shuddered, dropped to the floor and crawled on hands and knees out through the noiseless, swinging door. Once outside of the church he stamped off the snow, loudly cleared his throat, struck his cane awkwardly against the casement—walked in.

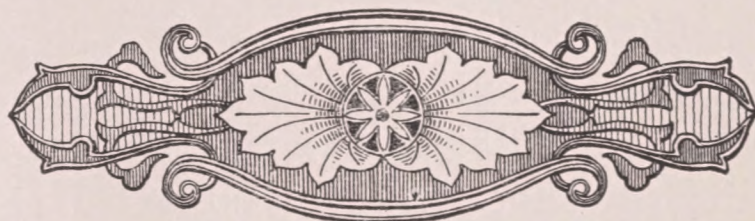
"How kind of you to come for me," said the girl, as she stood while Mr. Burtis assisted her on with her coat.

“You should have been here sooner and heard the solo,” cheerily spoke the young rector.

“Yes, I should have come sooner.”

“Why, how cold your hand is! Your voice does not sound right,” said the girl. “You are not sick?”

“No, no, the air is chill.”





CHAPTER XIII.

“Last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history. . .”

AT supper that evening Hillard was more attentive than usual to the wants of the blind girl.

He tried to joke and laugh, but his mirth was not infectious. His eyes were bloodshot; he ate scarcely anything. After supper he even forgot his pipe. He paced the room and then he took down the violin and improvised for an hour with closed eyes. He imitated the rising gale, the hurrying sleet, the howling of the wind; the storm without was only expressing the storm within.

He followed Mrs. Griggs into the little kitchen and frightened her by his wild manner.

“Lock the door to-night so I cannot go out; it is death if I do. Do not let me leave this house alone,” he exclaimed in a voice hoarse and guttural.

The woman heard him pacing the floor long after all the family had gone to bed, then she heard the shrill notes of the violin. Finally the playing died away in sweetest harmony.

Morning came. Hillard was calm.

The snow was falling in frosty flakes; it was

too cold to snow hard. The network of wires was filled with the white mounds that massed themselves in fantastic forms.

"It will be Christmas in a week, and what ideal winter weather," said Hillard to Mrs. Griggs as he peered out of the window.

"But we will go to Brooklyn even if it is cold. You know the flowers the good man promised me for to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes, we will go this afternoon just the same. We are not afraid of storms," said Hillard to the blind girl.

The generous gardener was even more gracious than usual. He feared they would not come—it was so stormy. And the solo at St. Cecilia's—yes, he and his wife had talked of little else for a week. Of course they would be there. The roses he had placed in the basket must be kept covered. Tea roses, Jacqueminots, and then the yellows and whites. What difference—the blind girl knew the colors of each and would arrange them harmoniously to suit herself. "No one who can see with their eyes gets a greater delight from flowers than you," added the man.

"They *do* speak to me. If I sing well to-morrow it will be because the flowers helped me," said the girl as she took up the basket. Hillard muffled the wraps carefully around her neck. The beautiful young woman was in the best of spirits—there was a suggestion of roses in her cheeks as if the glow had been caught from the roses in the basket. They started for the ferry arm in arm.

The gathering gloom of the winter night was coming on.

"How thankful I am that I was born poor—to have lived hardly—to have endured; God is good—one needs very little. Would it be very wicked for me to be glad that you are poor so I can help you? You who have done so much for me—I might have died in the storm on that night when you found and befriended me away out in Indiana. But I will pay you all back, I know I can. Just to think! they are going to give me five dollars for singing to-morrow, and soon I will be in the choir every Sunday. Mr. Burtis says it will make people better just to hear little me sing. It does not seem possible, but he says so, so it must be so——"

"Mr. Burtis—yes—he says so——"

Hillard was making a mighty struggle to be calm. He succeeded so far as voice was concerned, save that he spoke very slowly. He continued in a low tone:

"Mr. Burtis, yes—he is good. He is respected—he receives a large salary—he has many influential friends—you love him, do you not?"

"Yes, yes, I love him. I was going to tell you all about it, but you have guessed it. Are you not pleased to think that your poor little waif should be loved by a great and good man? And he loves no other woman but me. He never loved any woman until he saw me. Are you not glad? To be blind and to be loved, what happier fate?"

"And—and some day you will be—be married?"

"Why, yes of course, some day. In a year—if you are willing—in a year."

Hillard looked into those sightless eyes: the stillness of eternity brooded there. They were clear as truth: as though her soul was keeping sabbath within and angels conducting the service.

They had reached the ferry.

Hillard left the girl in the woman's waiting-room and walked on through. He stood at the glass door and looked out at the driving storm. This door was locked, except to allow passengers to go in and out when the ferry-boats came into the slip.

The man on guard came in past Hillard to speak to some one at the ticket office. He left the door ajar. It was only an instant. Hillard saw that the chain which ran across the front of the dock was down; a boat was momentarily expected.

Hastily he turned to the girl, took her basket of flowers, and said:

"Come, Jimmy, we will cross the river."

"Is the boat here? I did not hear it come in."

"Yes, be quick—take my hand, come! Look, the stars are coming out—the clouds are drifting away. Hold my hand close and look up, and then you will see what I see."

The man's face was looking upward, and the gaze was fixed out into the night. The girl's eyes were also upturned; straight ahead they walked, hand close pressed in hand. They were approaching the edge of the dock, five steps from the brink—four—three—two—one——!!

The guard came back.

“ I thought I heard a woman scream,” he muttered to himself ; “ it must have been only the wind sighing through the shrouds of yonder ship.”

He took his lantern, and holding it over the dock, peered down into the water ten feet below.

“ Flowers—flowers at this time of the year, and floating in the water ! I have seen flowers in gardens, flowers at banquets, flowers at weddings, flowers on graves—ah—there is the boat now ; she must have been blocked by the ice.”

THE END.







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